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HISTORY, SCRIPTURE, AND PRACTICE IN THE INDO-ISMĀʻĪLĪ TRADITION

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

RELIGION

AUGUST 2015

By

Ali S. Samji

Thesis Committee:

Ramdas Lamb, Chairperson
Lee Siegel
Jesse Knutson

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A thesis begins with an idea and
ends with a discovery.

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ABSTRACT

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To date, the study of the Fāṭimid and Alamūt – Arabic and Persian – periods of the Shīʿah Imāmī Ismāʿīlī Muslims has taken precedence over the study of the Indo-Ismāʿīlī period. For this reason, the present thesis will consider the 'Indian' phase of the tradition by focusing on their history, scripture, and practice. Throughout the thesis, several *gināns* (Indo-Ismāʿīlī devotional literature) orated by the Ismāʿīlī *pīrs* (Persian sing.: پیر 'preacher-saint') will be used to illustrate the devotional aspects of the tradition. By examining the *ginānic* corpus, it will be argued that the *pīrs* consciously merged Indian (e.g., *avatāra*: incarnation) and Ismāʿīlī (e.g., Mahdī: "Lord of the Resurrection") concepts to create a distinctive tradition (Satpanth: "the true path") in the Indian milieu.

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MAP

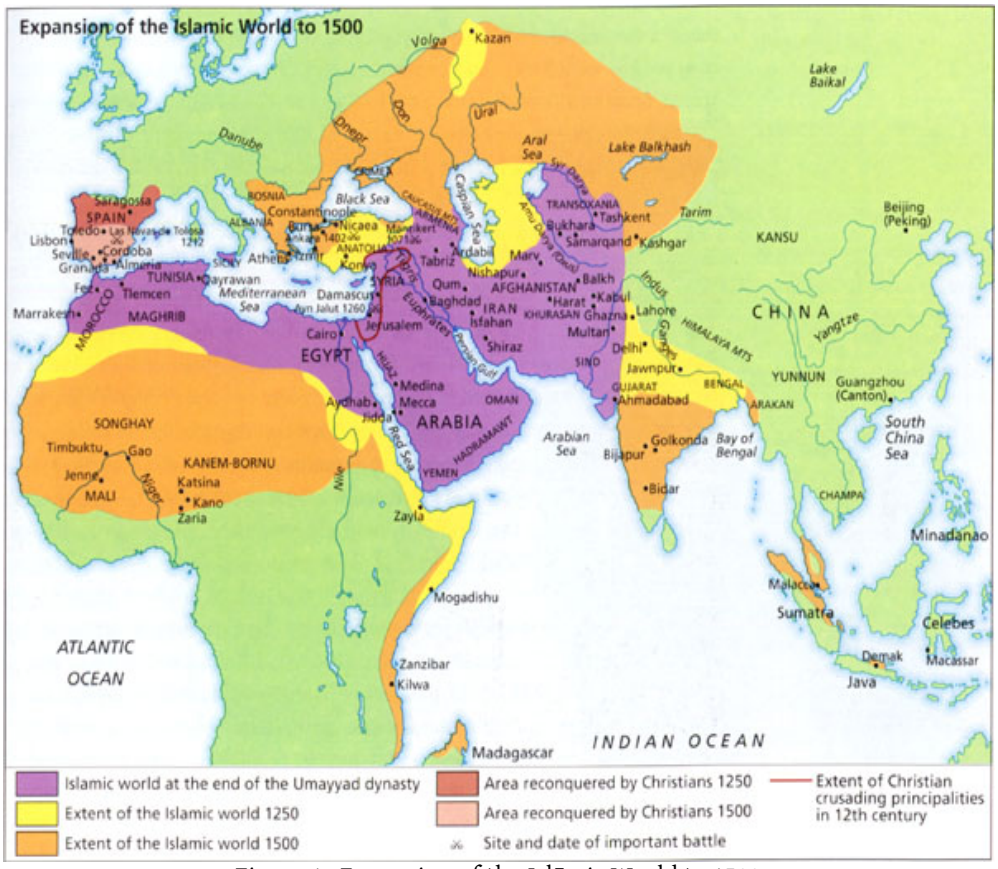

Figure 1. Expansion of the Islāmic World to 1500
Mapping Globalization Project, Princeton University.

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CHART

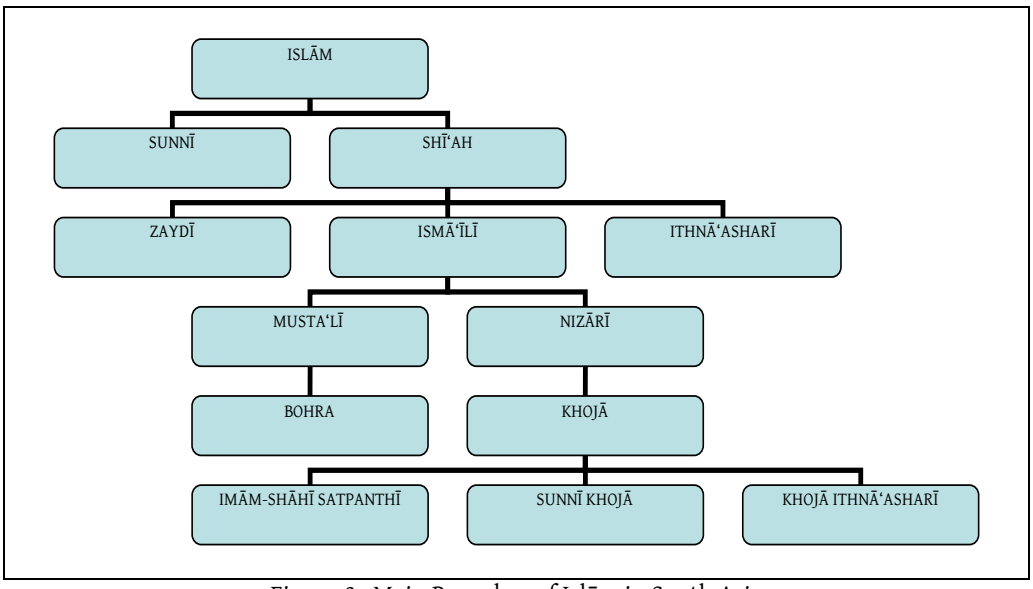

Figure 2. Main Branches of Islām in South Asia

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PREFACE

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Eji har-dam karo abhiyās
Karine dekho ji.

O Brother: Always contemplate
and after this see the results.[1]

This thesis considers the history, scripture, and practice of the Shī'ah Imāmī Ismā'īlī[2] Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. To date, research on the Ismā'īlīs has focused mainly on the Fāṭimid (909-1171) and Alamūt (1090-1256) periods of their history. It is therefore the objective of this study to approach the Ismā'īlī tradition from an 'Indian' – and not an exclusively 'Arabic-Islāmic' – perspective. By examining the *ginānic* corpus (Indo-Ismā'īlī devotional literature),[3] it will be argued that the Ismā'īlī *pīrs*[4] (Persian sing.: پیر 'preacher-saint')[5] consciously merged Indian (e.g., *avatāra*: incarnation)[6] and Ismā'īlī (e.g., Mahdī: "Lord of the Resurrection")[7] concepts to create a distinctive tradition (Satpanth: "the true path")[8] in

[1] "Holy Ginan No. 10: Sayyada Imambegum's *Hardam Karo Abhiyaas*," SalmanSpiritual.Com, accessed March 24, 2014, http://salmanspiritual.com/Ramadan_ginans/Ginan_10.html.
[2] "[T]he Ismā'īlīs did not call their religion 'Ismā'īlism.' This was a name given to them by the early heresiographers, notably al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī. They referred to themselves simply as the Faith of Truth (*dīn al-ḥaqq*) or the Summons to the Truth (*da'wah al-ḥaqq*). The fifteenth-century Ismā'īlī author, Abū Isḥāq Quhistānī, states quite plainly that 'the people of the Truth are the people of the Summons.' Such designations remained common even when the community spread to South Asia, where it came to be known as the Path of Truth (*satpanth*)" (Shafique N. Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, A Search for Salvation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 71-72).
[3] Devotional orations.
[4] Itinerant vernacular bards.
[5] Ali S. Asani, *The Harvard Collection of Ismaili Literature in Indic Languages: A Descriptive Catalog and Finding Aid* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1992), 7. "At the end of the nineteenth century, the third Āqā Khān, Imām Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh did an important reform by taking for himself the title of Pīr of the Khojās" (Michel Boivin, "Ginān and the Management of the Religious Heritage of the Ismaili Khojas in Sindh," in *Ginān, Texts and Contexts: Essays on Ismaili Hymns from South Asia in Honour of Zawahir Moir*, Rev. ed., eds. Tazim R. Kassam and Françoise Mallison (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), 32).
[6] See Gulshan Khakee, "*The Dasa Avatāra of the Satpanthi Ismailis and the Imam Shahis of Indo-Pakistan*" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1972).
[7] See Christopher Shackle and Zawahir Moir, *Ismaili Hymns from South Asia: An Introduction to the Ginans* (London: The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1992), 158-159.
[8] Ali S. Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim: The Articulation of Ismaili Khoja Identity in South Asia," in *A Modern History of the Ismailis: Continuity and Change in a Muslim Community*, ed. Farhad Daftary (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011), 96.

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the Indian milieu.[9] Sunnī Islām and other strands of Shī'ī Islām would deem this admixture *bid'ah* (innovation).[10] However, for the Ismā'īlīs, this is not the case. Furthermore, the Ismā'īlīs do not consider themselves Hindus, but Muslims, i.e., members of the *ummah* (Muslim community). This is attested by the fact that they neither attend Hindu temples nor worship idols, but rather, attend *jamā'at-khānas* ("assembly house")[11] where the Arabic name of God, Allāh, is invoked.[12]

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Secondly, despite the fact that a number of primary and secondary sources are extant, the period of the Ismā'īlīs in the subcontinent has not been thoroughly researched. In terms of scripture, unlike the study of the Rāma story in the indigenous religious traditions, there is a dearth of research addressing the Ismā'īlī account of 'Alī's[13] *avatāra* as Rāma.[14] For Hindus and Ismā'īlīs alike, Rāma is an important figure; however, for the Ismā'īlīs, "Rāma and Raḥmān [viz. 'Alī] are [both] one and the same" (Gujarātī: એક નુર *ek nur*: one light).[15] In his *ginān*, *Dasa*

[9] Ali S. Asani says: "Our survey of the *ginān* literature and its characteristics and themes is of considerable importance in placing this genre within the context of the Indo-Muslim literary tradition. The significant similarities and parallelisms to which we have alluded serve to reveal the intimate connection of the *gināns* to the religious and literary milieu from which they emerged. They do not necessarily imply direct borrowing, but merely emphasize the interaction that was going on at the various levels of Indian society at the time. The assimilative character of the *ginān* literature is, in fact, illustrative of the nature of Nizārī Ismā'īlism as a whole: a religious tradition with a remarkable ability to integrate disparate elements from a variety of cultural contexts as a means of elaborating its own universal concepts" (Idem, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment: The Ismaili Devotional Literature of South Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2002), 48). "[A] critical aspect of the *pīrs*' activities was the creation of a new literature – the *ginān* literature – geared for those embarking on *satpanth* (the true path), the Indic vernacular term utilized by the *pīrs* to refer to Ismā'īlī Islām" (Ibid., 32).

[10] Farhad Daftary notes that "[t]he Ismā'īlīs have almost continuously faced the hostility of the majority of Muslim dynasties and groups. Indeed, they have been amongst the most severely persecuted communities in the Islāmic world. As a result, the Ismā'īlīs have been obliged for the most part to live clandestinely, guarding secretly their religious beliefs and literature" (Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), xv-xvi).

[11] Ibid., 731.

[12] See Pīr Shams' *ginān*, *Hamadīla khālaka allāha sohī vasejī jeṇe kāyama kudarata calāī* (Tazim R. Kassam, *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: Hymns of the Satpanth Ismā'īlī Muslim Saint, Pīr Shams* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 232-233).

[13] 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muḥammad.

[14] Khakee, 26.

[15] See transliteration and other translations of "*Saaheb Ji Tu(n) More Man Bhaave* by Pir Sayyed Muhammed Shah," Heritage Society, accessed March 26, 2014, http://www.ismaili.net/ginans/g79saa.html. A verse of Pīr

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Avatāra ("Ten Incarnations"),[16] which was committed to writing in the 18th century,[17] Pīr/Sayyid Imām Shāh[18] (d. 1513)[19] orates that in the four Hindu epochs, 'Alī (Hari),[20] who is identified as the Hindu deity Viṣṇu (Hari–"an appellation of Viṣṇu"),[21] appeared as ten *avatāras*.[22] In his many incarnations, 'Alī is not distinct from Viṣṇu, but is himself Viṣṇu (one light).[23]

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Lastly, in terms of practice, the study of the *bāṭin* (esoteric) aspect of the Indo-Ismā'īlī tradition, unfortunately, has not been thoroughly studied in the field of Indo-Muslim studies.[24]

Shams' *ginān* says this about Raḥmān: "*rab tuṅ rahemān tuṅ, ali aval ākhar kāji tuṅhi tuṅ*" ("You are the Lord, you are the merciful one, o 'Alī, the first and the last, the judge, just you...") (See Shackle and Moir, 157). See "[s]ometime after the beginning of his preaching, perhaps after two years, Muḥammad begins to use the name *al-Raḥmān*, 'The Merciful One,' for his God, and conspicuously, in *Sūrahs* 56, 68, 78, 89[,] and 93 *Lord* and *Raḥmān* are used side by side, with no mention of Allāh. Unlike *Lord*, *Raḥmān* is a name, always used with the article and quite different from the various other appellatives applied to God in the Qur'ān" (F.E. Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 156-157).

[16] Khakee, 3. "Professor B. Lewis suggested that the idea of the Ten Incarnations of the Satpanthī Ismā'īlīs might be comparable to the already existent Ismā'īlī idea of the Ten Intellects (which come into Ismā'īlism from the neo-Platonic idea of emanations). It may be quite possible that this parallelism was present in the mind of the early Ismā'īlī Pīr who took over the idea of the Hindu Ten Incarnations in order to form a symbiotic bridge between Nizārī Ismā'īlī Islām, and Hinduism" (Ibid., 40).

[17] Ibid., 16. "It is quite probable that the work was recited orally, and not written down for quite some time, (the earliest copy we have is the one in the Kx ms., dated...1737), hence the language must have continued to change; although the presence of certain medieval terms in the work does indicate a composition earlier than the earliest ms. version available" (Ibid.). See information on manuscripts (mss), ibid., 4-10.

[18] Ibid., 16. "The period 1500-1850 may appropriately be termed the age of the Sayyids" (Shackle and Moir, 8).

[19] "Imām Shāh died in 1513 in Pīrāna, the city he founded, and which became the necropolis of the Imām-Shāhī sect later on..." (Azim Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1978), 81).

[20] "The *Dasamo Avatāra* text (Kx 6 and 7)...say[s] that Hari (an appellation of Viṣṇu) is the tenth Nakalaṅki incarnation..." (See Khakee, 44). "[T]he names 'Qā'im' and 'Shāh' which are solely used of the Imām, and not of the Prophet, are used synonymously in the *Dasamo Avatāra* text with the appellations of Viṣṇu such as 'Hari,' 'Abhaṃga,' 'Pratipāl'[,] etc." (Ibid.). "In recent editions of *ginān* texts published by community institutions, for example, the word 'Hari' is replaced by "Alī,' and so on" (Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment*, 31). According to Annemarie Schimmel, "[m]any of the *gināns* are sung in a mixed idiom, for as they were in the first place oral literature, words could be changed in the course of time – a singer might explain an unfamiliar word by something better known to his audience, or change the rhyme – exactly as it has happened in every early culture. This process is called in German *Zersingen*, that is, to sing a verse so often and under different circumstances that it becomes 'threadbare' and changes colour to a certain extent. Such changes reflect the living presence in the community of certain beloved songs" (Ibid., xvi).

[21] Khakee, 44.

[22] See ibid., passim.

[23] See ibid., 3.

[24] The Ismā'īlīs are first and foremost known in the field of Islāmic studies as founders and ambassadors of the Fāṭimid Caliphate in Ifrīqiya (North Africa). Despite the availability of sources, e.g., the *gināns*, there is still a dearth of research addressing the Ismā'īlī period in the Indian subcontinent. The *gināns* represent a unique opportunity to close the gap in Indo-Ismā'īlī studies.

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It is therefore vital that research be done on this subject, as it will shed light on why the *pīrs* (e.g., Pīr Shams al-Dīn Sabzawārī) consciously merged Indian *yogic* and ascetic practices while rejecting the various practices of pseudo-Ṣūfīs and Hindu pseudo-ascetics.[25] From the standpoint of these *pīrs*, yoga and asceticism were to be practiced while simultaneously fulfilling one's worldly *dharma* (duty). Balance between *dīn* ("religion") and *dunyā* ("world") was all-important.[26] This understanding of balance was not only championed by the *pīrs*, but centuries earlier, the *Bhagavadgītā* and Buddha also deemed it quintessential.[27] The question then becomes, if the *pīrs* rejected the ascetic path,[28] why did they consciously merge Indian *yogic* and ascetic practices with the *bāṭin* aspect of the Ismā'īlī tradition? It is evident in the *ginān*s that this was done; however, by doing so, as we will come to see, they directly made a contribution – the Imām as keeper and revealer of the *bol* or *al-ism al-a'ẓam* ("the great Name")[29] – to the spiritual practices already prevalent in the subcontinent. For our study, we will make use of a number of sources, including Pīr Shams al-Dīn Sabzawārī's[30] *ginān*, *Brahm Prakāsh* ("Divine Illumination"),[31] and Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtra*.[32] In addition, by considering a

[25] See Hasina M. Jamani, "*Brahm Prakāsh*: A Translation and Analysis" (MA Thesis, McGill University, 1985), 42-46.
[26] Malise Ruthven, "The Aga Khan Development Network and Institutions," in *A Modern History of the Ismailis: Continuity and Change in a Muslim Community*, ed. Farhad Daftary (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011), 191.
[27] "[T]he *Gītā* shows how this attainment for spiritual life is possible even when living a worldly life" (M.G. Bhagat, *Ancient Indian Asceticism* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1976), 31). "The teachings of the Buddha, the *Gītā*[,] and the *Yoga [S]ūtras* by Patañjali...emphasised the quiet and sane self-control which is the joyful positive aspect of *tapas*" (Ibid., 27).
[28] See Shackle and Moir, 20-21 and 188.
[29] Jamani, 9.
[30] Pīr Shams al-Dīn Sabzawārī (d. 1356) (John Norman Hollister, *The Shi'a of India* (London: Luzac & Company, 1979), 355 and see Kassam, 78). Pīr Shams al-Dīn Sabzawārī was "[a] charismatic personage representing the prototype of a holy man possessed of sacred lore and miraculous powers, he has acquired a substantial layer of folklore and oral tradition which depicts him variously as a powerful *yogī*, a miracle worker, and a Muslim *faqīr*" (Kassam, 75).
[31] Jamani, 7. "The *ginān*[,] *Brahm Prakāsh*[,] consists of 150 couplets, composed in a mixture of old Gujarātī and Hindī. It is composed in a mystical vein, discussing the various mystical states and stages towards the realization of the mystical experience and contains instructions on how to attain it" (Ibid., 9). "The text used for this thesis [i.e., Hasina M. Jamani's thesis] is published by Mukhī Lāljī Devrāj, *Brahm Prakāsh, A Ginān by Pīr Shams al-Dīn*, Bombay, 1921" (Ibid., 14). "[T]he *Brahm Prakāsh*...appears to find its basis in an indigenous Indian religious phenomenon, the Tantric tradition" (Ibid., 55). "A study of the *Brahm Prakāsh* will...not only aid in obtaining an

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number of *gināns*, a plethora of ideas will be brought to the fore on the interactions between

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Ismā'īlī *pīrs*, Hindu ascetics, and Ṣūfīs in the Indian religious milieu.

overall understanding of what the Tantric terms imply in the *gināns*, but will also determine to what extent Tantrism has found expression in the Nizārī Ismā'īlī system of thought in the Indian Sub-continent" (Ibid., 56). "[T]he key terms used in the *Brahm Prakāsh* to express mystical stages and experience appear to be a part of the elaborated Yoga discipline, namely the Haṭha Yoga of the Tantric tradition" (Ibid.).

[32] "Nothing is known of the author of the *Yoga Sūtra*, not even whether he lived in the second or third century BCE or in the fifth century CE, although claims to both datings have been vigorously defended" (Mircea Eliade, s.v. Yoga, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 14: Transcendental Meditation – Zwingli, Huldrych, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 9894). "For several hundred years prior to its 'discovery' by a British Orientalist in the early 1800s, the *Yoga Sūtra* had been a lost tradition. As a result, scribes had stopped copying *Yoga Sutra* manuscripts (because no one cared to read them) and instruction in Yoga philosophy had been dropped from the traditional Hindu curriculum (because no one cared to recite or memorize the *sūtras*)" (David Gordon White, *The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali: A Biography* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014), 16).

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CHAPTER ONE

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HISTORY: THE ISMĀ'ĪLĪS, THEIR IMĀMS, AND PĪRS

You people! We have created you from a male and a female,
and made you into nations and tribes, that
you might get to know one another.[1]

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Muslim[2] tradition narrates that Ibrāhīm (Abraham) was brought up in a society where the worship of idols[3] was commonplace. In search of truth, the *Qur'ān* relates that Ibrāhīm would reflect:

When night drew its shadow over him, he saw a star.
'That,' he said, 'is surely my God.'
But when it faded in the morning light, he said:
'I will not worship gods that fade.'
When he beheld the rising moon, he said:
'That is my God.' But when it set, he said:
'If my Lord does not guide me, I shall surely go astray.'
Then, when he beheld the sun shining, he said:
'That must be my God: it is the largest.'
But when it set, he said to his people:
'I disown your idols. I will turn my face to Him
who has created the heavens and the earth,
and will live a righteous life.
I am no idolater.'[4]

At some point, Ibrāhīm and his first-born son, Ismā'īl, were sanctioned by God to build the Ka'bah (shrine)[5] at Bakkah/Becca (later called Makkah/Mecca).[6] Ibrāhīm's belief in one God

[1] Chapter (*sūrah*) 49, verse (*āyah*) 13 (*The Koran*, trans. N.J. Dawood (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 364).
[2] "In Arabic[,] the word *muslim* means 'one who surrenders (to God)'..." (David Kinsley and Vasudha Narayanan, s.v. Devotion, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 4: Dacian Riders – Esther, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 2318).
[3] "Anthropologists...tend to be comfortable using the word *idol* and argue that it more accurately reflects the theological and ritual understanding of Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains who themselves use *idol* in English. Furthermore, they say not to use the term is to disrespect those who in good faith do use it, by implying that their use of the term betrays an ignorance of the negative connotations of *idolatry* in Abrahamic theologies. Still other scholars of religion prefer to use *idol* on the grounds that *image* is too neutral a term. These scholars argue that *image* does not convey adequately the depth of feelings aroused by idols in both devotees and critics" (John E. Cort, s.v. Images: Images, Icons, and Idols, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 7: Iconography – Justin Martyr, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 4388).
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[4] *The Koran*, *sūrah* 6, *āyāt* (verses) 76-79.

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set the precedent for his people and later generations. This, however, was not to last. During

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the period of ignorance (*jāhiliyyah*), the pre-Islāmic Arabian Meccans worshipped idols. Not only was this the case, but Meccan society as a whole was divided among the rich and poor. Mecca was in need of a visionary. It was here that Muḥammad in 570 was born.

Before Muḥammad became the Prophet of Islām, Zayd b. Ḥārithah narrates that

> [t]he Prophet slaughtered a ewe for one of the idols (*nuṣub min al-anṣāb*); then he roasted it and carried it with him. Then Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl met us in the upper part of the valley; it was one of the hot days of Mecca. When we met we greeted each other with the greeting of the Age of barbarism, *in'am ṣabāḥan*. The Prophet said: 'Why do I see you, O son of 'Amr, hated by your people?' He said: 'This (happened) without my being the cause of their hatred; but I found them associating divinities with God and I was reluctant to do the same. I wanted (to worship God according to) the religion of Ibrāhīm....' The Prophet said, 'Would you like some food?' He said, 'Yes.' Then the Prophet put before him the (meat of the ewe). He [viz. Zayd b. 'Amr] said: 'What did you sacrifice to, O Muḥammad?' He said, 'To one of the idols.' Zayd then said: 'I am not the one to eat anything slaughtered for a divinity other than God.'[7]

Not all in Mecca were idol worshippers.[8] Individuals such as Zayd b. 'Amr believed in only one God.[9] Learning from example, Muḥammad's outlook began to change. In fact, he would retire

[5] "The English word *shrine* is derived from the Latin *scrinium*, meaning a box or receptacle. The shrine is the receptacle within the material world for the religious association that believers experience when they come into the presence of these receptacles. Many shrines are unambiguously religious, linking events, persons, and places central to religious traditions" (Paul B. Courtright, s.v. Shrines, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 12: Rnying Ma Pa – Soul, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 8376). "According to all Shī'ī authorities and several Sunnī sources, 'Alī [b. Abī Ṭālib] had the unique distinction of being born in the Ka'bah in Mecca" (Reza Shah-Kazemi, *Justice and Remembrance: Introducing the Spirituality of Imam 'Alī* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2007), 14).

[6] *The Koran*, *sūrah* 3, *āyah* 96. After its construction, they beseeched their Lord: "Accept this from us, Lord" (Ibid., *sūrah* 2, *āyah* 127).

[7] al-Khargūshī, *Sharaf al-muṣṭafā* (Adapted from F.E. Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 126-127).

[8] Polytheism can be broken up in its Greek form, *polus* meaning 'many' and *theos* meaning 'god.' Monotheism too can be broken up in its Greek form, *mono* meaning 'one' and *theos* meaning 'god' (R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, s.v. Polytheism, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 11: Pius IX – Rivers, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 7315-7316). "Some scholars consider henotheism (the exclusive worship of one god only without denying the existence of other gods) as an intermediary stage between polytheism and monotheism, the latter being defined as the theoretical recognition of the existence of one god only, all the others being (in the language of the Old Testament) sheer 'vanity and nothingness'" (Ibid., 7318). "Monolatry means one God is worshiped as supreme, though the lesser gods of other peoples are recognized. Henotheism (kathenotheism) would be the view that different gods can be worshiped as the supreme God one at a time without implying that the other gods do not exist" (Theodore M. Ludwig, s.v. Monotheism, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 9: Mary – Ndembu Religion, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 6158). "The processional chant of the pagans of the 'Era of Ignorance' was, we are told, 'Here I am, O Allāh, here I am; you have no partner except

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to the cave of Mount Ḥirā' where he would become absorbed in meditative thought. On one such occasion, he was visited by the Archangel Gabriel (Jibrā'īl). This visit, one can say, was the formal inauguration of his prophethood (*nubuwwah*) and the beginning of his mission (*da'wah*).[10] Muḥammad was forty years old.

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Muḥammad eventually began to preach to the Meccans. He preached about the one and only God, Allāh, and the importance of treating others with kindness and respect:

> Serve God and associate none with Him.
> Show kindness to parents and kindred,
> to orphans and to the destitute,
> to near and distant neighbours,
> to those that keep company with you,
> to the traveller in need, and to the slaves you own.[11]

Those who heeded his message joined his cause.[12] What is more, a number of affluent members who joined experienced downward mobility, i.e., they were stripped of their wealth and social status.

such a partner as you have; you possess him and all that is his.' The last clause may reflect what was an emerging tendency toward henotheism, the recognition of Allāh as the 'High God' of Mecca, but it was not sufficient for the stricter Muslims who put in its place their own manifestly monotheistic hymn: 'Here I am, O Allāh, here I am; You have no partner; the praise and the grace are Yours, and the empire; You have no partner'" (F.E. Peters, *A Reader on Classical Islam* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 39). "Once man has thus comprehended the essence of existence there remains for him the duty, since he knows the absolute value of his own soul, of making for himself a direct path which will constantly lead his individual soul to and bind it with the universal Soul of which the Universe, as much of it as we perceive with our limited vision, is one of the infinite manifestations. Thus Islām's basic principle can only be defined as monorealism and not as monotheism" (Aga Khan III, *The Memoirs of Aga Khan: World Enough and Time* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1954), 175). "The Imām [Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh] had elaborated this concept [of monorealism] from the Ṣūfī concept of *waḥdat-i wujūd*" (Michel Boivin, "Gināns and the Management of the Religious Heritage of the Ismaili Khojas in Sindh," in *Gināns, Texts and Contexts: Essays on Ismaili Hymns from South Asia in Honour of Zawahir Moir*, Rev. ed., eds. Tazim R. Kassam and Françoise Mallison (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), 34-35).

[9] "In emphasizing the Abrahamic strain in Islām, the *Qur'ān* calls Ibrāhīm a *ḥanīf*, a somewhat mysterious term, but one that the *Qur'ān* contextually identifies with *muslim* in referring to Ibrāhīm. Like Ibrāhīm himself, a *ḥanīf* is explicitly distinguished from Jews or Christians on the one hand and from idolators or 'associators' on the other, all summed up in a single verse of the *Qur'ān*: Ibrāhīm was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian, but was a ḥanīf, a muslim, and was not one of the 'associators' (*Qur'ān* 3:67)" (F.E. Peters, *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 41-42).

[10] For Ismā'īlī *da'wah*, see Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 2. "The term *da'wah* is derived from the verb to invite" (Tazim R. Kassam, "Reframing Ginānic Studies: Thoughts on Multiple Positions and Heuristic Tropes," in *Gināns, Texts and Contexts: Essays on Ismaili Hymns from South Asia in Honour of Zawahir Moir*, Rev. ed., eds. Tazim R. Kassam and Françoise Mallison (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), 13).

[11] *The Koran*, *sūrah* 4, *āyah* 36.

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A good number of Meccans did not take Muḥammad's preaching lightly. To them, it seemed as though he was deliberately mocking the idol worshipping belief system of their forefathers. Moreover, his preaching also posed a problem to the affluent unbelievers, as it not only divided society into believers (*mu'minūn*) and unbelievers (*kuffār*), but it also altered their flourishing economy and perfunctory lifestyle. Seen as a destabilizer of society, Muḥammad, and by association his followers, were treated harshly.[13]

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As a shepherd minds his sheep, Muḥammad had to look after his followers. For his and his followers' safety, he decided that Yathrib (renamed: al-Madīnah), located north of Mecca, would become their temporary place of refuge. In the year 622, they immigrated (*hijrah*) there. In time, a number of battles (e.g., Badr, Uḥud) were waged between the unbelievers and believers. In the eyes of the believers, history was soon to see a reversal of fortune. In 630, i.e., almost eight years after the *hijrah*, Muḥammad and his offensive force of ten thousand returned and took Mecca in peaceful fashion. He destroyed the idols that were housed in and around the Ka'bah. Those who converted became members of the community of believers (*ummah*).[14] The importance of the oneness of God is paramount in Islām, as the profession of faith (*shahādah/kalimah*) stipulates that there is no god but God (*lā ilāha illā 'llāh*). To ascribe

[12] "Many of the converts, including a significant number of women, were members of the poorer clans..." (Karen Armstrong, s.v. Muḥammad, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 9: Mary – Ndembu Religion, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 6221). There were also those who had joined because they felt that the disparity among the rich and poor did not match the "Arab spirit" (Ibid.).

[13] Like the Ismā'īlīs and their Imāms in history, did Muḥammad practice dissimulation (*taqiyyah*) in order to avoid persecution (For *taqiyyah* in Ismā'īlism, see Daftary, 4)? "What Muḥammad did himself and what he required of others at Mecca is open to debate. The few Muslims lived alone and isolated in a hostile pagan milieu, and it would have been difficult to practice any type of public prayer that would have set them off from their relatives, friends and neighbors, and it may well have been that their prayers were identical in form and setting with the Quraysh's own or else were done privately and spontaneously" (Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam*, 164-165).

[14] They observed "[t]he three primary fundamentals of religion (*uṣūl al-dīn*)[:]...[i] *tawḥīd* (belief in the unity of God), [ii] *nubuwwah* (belief in prophets), and [iii] *qiyāmah* (belief in the Day of Judgment)" (Vernon James Schubel, s.v. Worship and Devotional Life: Muslim Worship, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 14: Transcendental Meditation – Zwingli, Huldrych, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 9815-9816).

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partners to God (*shirk*)[15] is viewed as blasphemous.[16] This significance of *tawḥīd/ waḥdānīyah* ("unity of God")[17] will be preached by the Ismā'īlī *pīrs*[18] in the Indian subcontinent, a place analogous to Mecca in that it abounded with idol worship.[19] In the year of his death, Muḥammad (632) related the following *Qur'ānic* verse: "This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour to you. I have chosen Islām to be your faith."[20] Muḥammad's *da'wah* was complete.

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DIVISIONS

After the Prophet's death, the *ummah* became divided over succession (SEE FIGURE 2). The Shī'ah (Party of 'Alī),[21] as the faction would come to be known, felt that 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib had been appointed by the Prophet himself to lead the community in religious and political

[15] "The *Qur'ān* tirelessly preaches the message of strict monotheism, exhorting its hearers to be ever mindful of God and obedient to His will. It rails against the sin of polytheism (*shirk*, literally 'associating' something with God)–which, Muslim tradition tells us, was the dominant religious outlook in Mecca when Muḥammad grew up there. From the *Qur'ān*'s or the Believers' perspective, failing to acknowledge the oneness of God, who created all things and gave us life, is the ultimate ingratitude and the essence of unbelief (*kufr*). But the *Qur'ān*'s strict monotheism also condemns the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as being incompatible with the idea of God's absolute unity: 'Those who say that God is the third of three, disbelieve; there is no god but the one God...' (Q. 5:73)" (Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 58-59).

[16] Fazlur Rahman, s.v. Islam: An Overview [First Edition], *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 7: Iconography – Justin Martyr, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 4563-4564.

[17] See Boivin, 34-35.

[18] "Etymologically[,] Pīr denotes someone who is advanced in age. In the Ismā'īlī context as in Ṣūfism, the Pīr is the spiritual guide, who has advanced on the path of spiritual knowledge. Its equivalent in Arabic is *Shaykh*, and *Guru* in Sanskrit" (Iqbal Surani, "*Kalām-i Maulā*: Notes on an Indian Ismaili Text," in *Gināns, Texts and Contexts: Essays on Ismaili Hymns from South Asia in Honour of Zawahir Moir*, Rev. ed., eds. Tazim R. Kassam and Françoise Mallison (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), 184-185). "[T]he supreme Pīr of the Nizārīs, [i.e.,] the Imām['s]...divine epiphany...is *Gur Nar*" (Dominique-Sila Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities: Ramdev Pir and the Ismailis in Rajasthan* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2003), 47). "*Murasid kāmal*: (...[('is derived from')] Per[sian:] *murśid-i kāmil*) the 'Perfect Guide,' used in the *gināns* as an epithet of the Pīr, synonymous with the usual *sat-gur*" (Christopher Shackle and Zawahir Moir, *Ismaili Hymns from South Asia: An Introduction to the Ginans* (London: The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1992), 152 and 213).

[19] "...Ivanow has pointed out that...'[p]rohibition of idolatry is the most prominent motive in the *gināns*...'" (Khan, 134).

[20] *The Koran*, *sūrah* 5, *āyah* 3.

[21] "Shī'ism is a major branch of Islām with numerous subdivisions, all upholding the rights of the family of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*) to the religious and political leadership of the Muslim community. The name is derived from *Shī'at 'Alī*, the Arabic term for the 'party' of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, cousin of the [P]rophet Muḥammad and husband of Muḥammad's daughter Fāṭimah" (Wilferd Madelung, s.v. Shiism: An Overview, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 12: Rnying Ma Pa – Soul, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 8320).

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matters.[22] The Sunnīs (People of Custom),[23] as they later came to be known, disagreed, and

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favored Abū Bakr, the close companion of Muḥammad, as political ruler. In the course of their history, the Shīʻah became divided over the right of succession. A splinter group of the Shīʻah claimed that Ismāʻīl, Imām Jaʻfar al-Ṣādiq's (d. 765)[24] son, was the legitimate successor and from whom they would become known as the Ismāʻīlīs.[25] Conversely, the Twelvers (*Ithnāʻasharīs*), as they later came to be called, accepted Ismāʻīl's agnate brother, Mūsā b. Jaʻfar, as their Imām.[26]

In 909 the Ismāʻīlīs founded the Fāṭimid Caliphate in Ifrīqiya (North Africa).[27] The death of the Fāṭimid Imām-Caliph, al-Mustanṣir bi'llāh (r. 1036-1094),[28] brought about yet another

[22] According to the Shīʻah, the Prophet Muḥammad after his Farewell Pilgrimage in 632 made a 'stop' at a place called Ghadīr Khumm (located "between Mecca and Medina") where he proclaimed 'Alī as his successor: "*...man kuntu mawlāhu fa-ʻAlī mawlāhu* (He of whom I am the master, of him 'Alī is also the master)...Furthermore, it is the Shīʻī belief that the Prophet had received the designation (*naṣṣ*) in question, nominating 'Alī as the Imām of the Muslims after his own death, through divine revelation. This event of the spiritual investiture of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib continues to be celebrated as one of the most important Shīʻī feasts" (Daftary, 39). "According to the Sunnī view, the Prophet had left neither formal instruction nor a testament regarding his successor. Amidst much ensuing debate, mainly between the Meccan emigrants (*muhājirūn*) and the Medinese Helpers (*anṣār*), Abū Bakr, one of the earliest converts to Islām and a trusted Companion of the Prophet, was elected as the successor. Abū Bakr's election was effectuated on the suggestion of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, another of the *muhājirūn*, and by the acclamation of other leading Companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥāba*), who accorded Abū Bakr their oath of allegiance (*bayʻa*). Abū Bakr, as the new leader of the Islāmic community, took the title of *khalīfat rasūl Allāh*, 'successor to the messenger of God,' a title which was soon simplified to *khalīfa* (whence the word *caliph* in Western languages). Thus, by electing the first successor to the Prophet, the unique Islāmic institution of the caliphate (*khilāfa*) was also founded" (Ibid., 36).

[23] "What is in fact called Sunnism means nothing more than the majority of the community; it had its content defined in large measure as a reaction to the Khārijīs and the Muʻtazilah, for Sunnī orthodoxy is but a refined and sophisticated form of that popular reaction that crystallized against these groups" (Rahman, 4568).

[24] Daftary, 88. "...Ivanow contends that [Jaʻfar]...is the 'real founder of Shīʻism as a separate theological school'" (John Norman Hollister, *The Shiʻa of India* (London: Luzac & Company, 1979), 76).

[25] Daftary, 88. "[T]he Ismāʻīlīs did not call their religion 'Ismāʻīlism.' This was a name given to them by the early heresiographers, notably al-Nawbakhtī and al-Qummī. They referred to themselves simply as the Faith of Truth (*dīn al-ḥaqq*) or the Summons to the Truth (*daʻwah al-ḥaqq*). The fifteenth-century Ismāʻīlī author, Abū Isḥāq Quhistānī, states quite plainly that 'the people of the Truth are the people of the Summons.' Such designations remained common even when the community spread to South Asia, where it came to be known as the Path of Truth (*satpanth*)" (Shafique N. Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, A Search for Salvation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 71-72). The Ismāʻīlīs do not acknowledge 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib's son, al-Ḥasan, as one of their Imāms. "Ivanow describes [Ismāʻīlism]...as 'the most catholic and highly developed form of Shīʻism'" (Hollister, 203).

[26] See Daftary, 88.

[27] Shackle and Moir, 4 and see Daftary, 137. The Fāṭimid Caliphate was named after Fāṭimah who was the daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad and wife of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (Daftary, 128).

[28] Ibid., 193.

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problem of succession.[29] His vizier, Abū'l-Qāsim Shāhanshāh,[30] took upon himself to purposely bypass Abū Manṣūr Nizār (1045-1095),[31] the Imām-Caliph's son,[32] by installing Abū'l-Qāsim Aḥmad (1074-1101),[33] the agnate brother of Nizār, as Fāṭimid Caliph.[34] In addition, the vizier added the appellation "al-Musta'lī bi'llāh" to Abū'l-Qāsim Aḥmad's name.[35] According to Ismā'īlī history, a two-part division occurred: Musta'lawiyyah/Musta'liyyah (followers of al-Musta'lī bi'llāh) and Nizāriyyah/Nizārīs (followers of Abū Manṣūr Nizār).[36] The Musta'lian Ismā'īlīs[37] continued to reign as Fāṭimid Caliphs until they were conquered by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Ayyūb (d. 1193)[38] during the reign of the last Fāṭimid Caliph, al-'Āḍid li-Dīn Allāh (r. 1160-1171).[39] Those who followed Abū Manṣūr Nizār on the other hand fled to Irān[40] where in 1090 the Ismā'īlī *dā'ī* ("*dā'īs* or religio-political missionaries"),[41] Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ (d. 1124),[42] secured Alamūt as their new home.[43] After the Mongols under the command of Hülegü (r.

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[29] Ibid., 241.
[30] In Persian, *shāh* = "king" and *shāhanshāh* = "king of kings, emperor" (Wheeler M. Thackston, *An Introduction to Persian*, Rev. 3rd ed. (Bethesda, Maryland: Ibex Publishers, Inc., 1993), 273).
[31] Daftary, 241.
[32] "[E]ldest son" (Ibid.).
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid., 243.
[37] Ibid., 241. "By the twelfth century,...[they] established communities around Cambay in Gujarāt, which became the hereditary *dā'īs* ' headquarters. Yet another split over succession to the leadership in 1591 led to the formation of two groups, the Dā'ūdī predominating in the Yemen and the Sulaymānī in India, where the Musta'lians are known as Bohras (...[('is derived from')] G[ujarātī:] *vohorvuṅ* 'to trade')..." (Shackle and Moir, 5 and 212-213). The Bohras "...recognize the following Imāms: Ḥasan through Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, five; Ismā'īl through Ḥusayn al-Mastūr, five; and 'Ubayd Allāh al-Mahdī through al-Ṭayyib, eleven; a total of twenty-one Imāms. 'Alī is not included as an Imām, for he has been advanced to the position of *Asās*" (Hollister, 265).
[38] Daftary, 252.
[39] Ibid., 249 and 251.
[40] "[T]he Daylamī region of Irān" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 31).
[41] Daftary, 2.
[42] Ibid., 302. "His genealogy as drawn up by his admiring followers was al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ja'far b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Ḥimyarī" (Hollister, 306).
[43] Daftary, 301. "Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was operating in Persia as an Ismā'īlī *dā'ī* and his seizure of the fortress of Alamūt in...1090 marked the effective foundation of what was to become the Nizārī Ismā'īlī state of Persia and Syria" (Ibid.). "...Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ founded the independent Nizārī Ismā'īlī *da'wah* on behalf of the Nizārī Imām (who was then inaccessible)" (Ibid.). 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad's (father of Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh) "...son...[,] who became well known as Shams al-Dīn Tabrīzī...left Alamūt to live in Irān some time before the destruction of Alamūt. He lived the life of a *darwīsh*, and a Ṣūfī, and seems to have been the spiritual teacher or *murshid* of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī. He

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1256-1265)[44] subdued it in 1256[45] and eventually put to death Imām Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh[46] (b. c. 1230)[47] in 1257,[48] the Imāms for many decades lived in concealment.[49] John Norman Hollister notes:

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> From allusions made by the [Nizārī][50] Persian poet, [Ḥakīm Sa'd al-Dīn b. Shams al-Dīn] Nizārī Quhistānī[51] [d. c. 1320],[52] it is known that Imām Shams al-Dīn [Muḥammad] [d. c. 1310,][53] [son of Imām Rukn al-Dīn Khurshāh,] and Qāsim Shāh[, son of Imām Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad,] lived [and ('died')][54] in Azerbaijan[/Ādharbayjān], and that vicinity seems to have been the centre for the Imāmate for about two centuries.[55]

It was around the 1450s that the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms came out of concealment in Anjudān (Anjidān).[56] It was here that Mustanṣir bi'llāh II[57] (r. c. 1463-1480)[58] became associated with a Ṣūfī order[59] and took the guise of a *shaykh* ("master").[60] This is not unusual, as in their history, the Ismā'īlīs and their Imāms frequently had to live in dissimulation (*taqiyyah*) in order to avoid persecution.[61] It was in the 1750s that the Qāsim-Shāhī Imāms relocated from Anjudān[62]

was killed in...1247" (Hollister, 318). According to the *ginān*, *Coghaḍiā sāṅjh nā* ("Evening Hymn"), composed by Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, "[t]he tidings of the Lord have spread through the world. Blessings be upon the Lord Pīr and the community! The Lord has appeared in the fortress of Alamūt. We are blessed, o brother, with happiness forever. O God, he has come, and the community enjoys good fortune. Hail the appearance of the Lord 'Alī in the West, o brother..." (Shackle and Moir, 86-89)!

[44] Daftary, 398.

[45] See ibid., 395-396.

[46] "[T]he eighth and final lord of Alamūt" (See ibid., 397).

[47] Ibid., 392.

[48] Ibid., 397.

[49] Ibid., 403. "[T]he Imāms remained in hiding and inaccessible to their followers for about two centuries" (Ibid.).

[50] Ibid., 406.

[51] Ibid., 749. "He was perhaps the first post-Alamūt Nizārī author to choose verse and Ṣūfī forms of expression for the camouflaging of his Ismā'īlī ideas" (Ibid., 406).

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid., 509.

[54] Hollister, 332.

[55] Ibid., 331.

[56] Daftary, 405. "Anjudān [/Anjidān is located]...between Qumm and Sulṭānābād northwest of Iṣfahān..." (Hollister, 334). It is "...a village in central Persia..." (Daftary, 405).

[57] "The thirty-second Imām of the Qāsim-Shāhīs..." (Ibid., 422-423).

[58] Ibid., 423. "Nizārī tradition places Mustanṣir's death in...1475-1476, which is in close agreement with the date given in his mausoleum, built during the Imāmate of his son and successor[,] 'Abd al-Salām Shāh" (Ibid.).

[59] Ibid., 461. "[T]he Ni'mat Allāhī Ṣūfī *ṭarīqah* [order]" (Ibid.).

[60] See Shackle and Moir, 5. For meanings of *shaykh*, see Daftary, 521.

[61] "By *taqiyyah*[,] the Shī'ah have preserved themselves in many an adverse or dangerous situation. But Ivanow shows the consequence of this practice in Persia, where, in an Ismā'īlī community 'accustomed to live in 'taqiyyah' and practising the external rites of Shī'ism,' there are numerous sectarians who have so identified

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to Kahak,[63] and thereafter to Kirmān.[64] Residing in Kirmān proved beneficial, as this allowed the Imāms to be closer to their *murīdān* (disciples)[65] residing in the subcontinent.[66] This proximity to the region also allowed the opportunity for the *murīdān* to visit and present their Imāms with the *dassondh*[67] (religious dues).[68] The Ismā'īlī tradition notes that Fatḥ 'Alī Shāh (r. 1797-1834)[69] gave Imām Ḥasan 'Alī Shāh (r. 1817-1881)[70] an important position in government[71] and also conferred upon him the appellation of Āqā Khān ("lord and master"),[72] which Imām Ḥasan 'Alī Shāh and subsequent Imāms have continued to use.[73]

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themselves with the Imāmī Shī'ah that they are Ismā'īlīs in name only" (Hollister, 54). "[T]he Ismā'īlīs...have for centuries been the target of Sunnī and Twelver Shī'ī aspersion" (Tazim R. Kassam, *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: Hymns of the Satpanth Ismā'īlī Muslim Saint, Pīr Shams* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 9).

[62] Daftary, 405 and 423.

[63] "[V]illage near Maḥallāt...in central Persia" (Ibid., 732). It "...became the *Dār-Khāna*" (Azim Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1978), 93). "The *Dārkhāna* can be considered as the chief or main *Jamā'at-khāna* in any given country where Ismā'īlīs reside. The decision to designate a *Jamā'at-khāna* as a *Dārkhāna* is made by the Imām of the Time, presently His Highness the Āqā Khān [IV]" ("Memories of Nairobi's Majestic 'Town Jamatkhana,' formerly the 'Darkhana' of Kenya, by Zahir Dharsee," Simerg, accessed August 3, 2014, http://simerg.com/the-jamatkhana/memories-of-nairobis-majestic-town-jamatkhana-formerly-the-darkhana-of-kenya/). According to the *ginān*, *eji saṅvat caud so ne bāvan, ane āsāḍh nuṅ re mās*, composed by Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn, "[i]t was the year VS [('Vikram Samvat')] 1452, and the month of Asadh [('*saṅvat*: i.e.[,] year of the Vikram Samvat (VS) calendar, beginning in 57 BC[E]. 17 Asadh VS 1452 is approximately equivalent to 2 July...1396')]. It appeared on the seventeenth date of the month, and it was a wall of iron which appeared. There the Guide prayed intensely, for months, for six months. When six months and six days had passed [('*cha más ne cha din*: i.e.[,] roughly 8 January...1397')], the Imām became merciful. It is told that the Lord Islām Shāh [('*siri isalām śāhā*: also referred to in the Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn *Das avatāra nāno*, this 'Islām Shāh,' whose place in Khojā list of Imāms is...taken by Ivanow to mean the late fifteenth-century Imām[,] 'Abd al-Salām Shāh[,]')] was the manifestation of the age, and that he was in Kahak. At that time the Guide was five years and five days old, o brother, then he was prepared. It was the year VS 1453, and the month of Maghsar [('*māgasar*: Maghsar VS 1453 corresponds to November-December...1397')]. Then he made a turban-cloth from swallow-wort, and then prepared it...It was the year VS 1452, and the month of Ramaḍān [('...the unusual mention of the Muslim month is presumably intended to fix the date given...[above, i.e., ('the month of Asadh')] more precisely. 17 Asadh VS 1450 = 2 July...1396 would indeed appear to have fallen within Ramaḍān AH 799')]. Then the Lord Islām Shāh had come to dwell in Kahak..." (See Shackle and Moir, 136-139 and 205-206). In light of the chronological contradictions with reference to Kahak, further research is needed. According to the *ginān*, *Venati* ("Entreaty"), composed by Sayyid 'Abd al-Nabī, "[t]he ever-living Lord and Master has his seat in Kahak, manifest in the form of 'Alī. He is the seventy-seventh vessel and fortieth Imām, made manifest as Shāh Nizār..." (Ibid., 98-101).

[64] Daftary, 405. "[C]ity and province...in Persia" (Ibid., 735).

[65] Ibid., 419 and 746.

[66] Shackle and Moir, 5.

[67] Daftary, 713.

[68] Shackle and Moir, 5.

[69] Daftary, 463. "[T]he second Qājār monarch, Fatḥ 'Alī Shāh (...[r.] 1797-1834),...is groundlessly reported to have secretly embraced Ismā'īlism" (Ibid.).

[70] Ibid., 509.

[71] "[A]ppointed...governor of Qumm" (Ibid., 464).

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ARRIVAL

Due to political tensions in Irān, the Āqā Khān[74] in 1841 emigrated to India.[75] After residing in Sind and Calcutta, he moved to Bombay in 1848[76] where a good number of Khojās lived.[77] However, being the first Imām on Indian soil, his authority was questioned by some members of the community about issues pertaining to his right to the *dassondh* and collective property.[78] The unwillingness to pay the *dassondh* was not a new development. During his stay in Persia (1829), i.e., before coming to India, there were individuals among the Bombay

[72] Ibid. "...Āghā Khān (less commonly but more correctly transcribed as Āqā Khān)..." (Ibid.). "This title was in due course simplified in Europe to Aga Khan" (Ibid.).

[73] Ibid., 463-464. "Shāh Khalīl Allāh III was succeeded by his eldest son[,] Muḥammad Ḥasan, also known as Ḥasan 'Alī Shāh. On moving to Yazd, Shāh Khalīl Allāh had left his wife, Bībī Sarkāra, and children in Kahak to live on the proceeds of the family holdings in the Maḥallāt area. However, disputes between the local Nizārīs and Īmānī Khān Farāhānī, who was married to one of the Imām's daughters[,] Shāh Bībī[,] and who had been placed in charge of the Imām's land holdings, left the family unprovided for. Soon, Ḥasan 'Alī Shāh and his mother settled down in the nearby town of Qumm, where their situation deteriorated. Ḥasan 'Alī Shāh was thirteen when his father was murdered and he became the forty-sixth Nizārī Imām. Soon after, the youthful Imām's mother went to the Qājār court in Tehran to seek justice for her husband and her son. Her pleadings were eventually successful. The instigators of Shāh Khalīl Allāh's murder were...punished...In addition, Fatḥ 'Alī Shāh added to the Imām's lands in the Maḥallāt area and gave one of his daughters, Sarv-i Jahān Khānum, in marriage to Ḥasan 'Alī Shāh. At the same time, the Qājār monarch appointed the Imām as governor of Qumm and bestowed on him the honorific title (*laqab*) of Āqā Khān..." (Ibid.).

[74] "For his services, 'rendered at imminent and personal risk and danger,' he was rewarded by the British with the hereditary title of 'His Highness'" (See Hollister, 366). According to the Ismā'īlīs, Ḥasan 'Alī Shāh (a.k.a. Āqā Khān I) was their 46th Imām (Ali S. Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim: The Articulation of Ismaili Khoja Identity in South Asia," in *A Modern History of the Ismailis: Continuity and Change in a Muslim Community*, ed. Farhad Daftary (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011), 105).

[75] Ibid. Tazim R. Kassam notes the Imām's arrival in India as 1845 (Kassam, "Reframing Ginānic Studies," 9). Hollister notes 1840 (Hollister, 364). Shackle and Moir note 1843 (Shackle and Moir, 179). In the *ginān*, *eji tam kuṅ sadhāre so dın bohotaj huā re piā*, Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn notes that "[t]he Royal Master [*sāmi rājo*] will assuredly enter India [*jaṅpudip*]" (Ibid., 100-101).

[76] Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 105 and see Hollister, 366. Azim Nanji notes 1845 as the year that "...the transference of the Imāmah from Irān to India with the coming of Āqā Khān I, Ḥasan 'Alī Shāh, to Bombay...[took place]" (Nanji, 94).

[77] Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 105. "...Bombay...at the time had the largest settlement of Khojās" (Ibid.). "On stated days[,]...[the Imām] led the '*namāz* ' or prayer in the *jamā'at-khāna* [('assembly house')] and presided over the distribution of water mixed with the holy dust of Karbalā'. Every week, on Saturday, when in Bombay, he held a *darbār* [('ceremonial courtly gathering')], when all the members of the Khojā community attended, in order to have the honour of kissing his hand and receiving his blessings" (Daftary, 731 and Alka Patel and Karen Leonard, "Introduction," in *Indo-Muslim Cultures in Transition*, eds. Alka Patel and Karen Leonard (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 9 and cited in Hollister, 366).

[78] Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 105-106. The Imām "...began to assert control over communally owned Khojā property..." (Ibid., 105).

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community who did not want to remit the *dassondh*.[79] Due to dissension within the Bombay community, the Imām in 1861[80] set into motion certain rites[81] in a leaflet that was to be attested to by his followers in the form of a signature.[82] "The signatories were, in effect, asked to pledge their loyalty to the Imām and to their Ismā'īlī Shī'ī Muslim faith as interpreted by him."[83] Not all complied. The Imām was taken to court. In the aftermath of "the Aga Khan Case of 1866"[84] (or "the Great Khoja Case of 1866"),[85] the Barbhai ("twelve brethren")[86] left the community and assumed a new identity as Sunnī Khojās.[87] In his ruling, Sir Justice Joseph Arnould noted that the Indian Ismā'īlīs are

> '[a] sect of people whose ancestors were Hindus in origin, which was converted to and has throughout abided in the faith of the Shī'ah Imāmī Ismā'īlīs and which has always been and still is bound by ties of spiritual allegiance to the hereditary Imāms of the Ismā'īlīs.'[88]

This case helped solidify the identity of the Indian Ismā'īlīs and the legitimate claim of the Imām over his followers.[89]

After the death of Imām Ḥasan 'Alī Shāh in 1881,[90] his son, Āqā 'Alī Shāh (Āqā Khān II), became Imām.[91] Not only was he interested in improving the lives of the members of the

[79] Daftary, 474.
[80] Hollister notes 1862 (Hollister, 368).
[81] Ibid., 368-369. For example, "marriage, ablutions, and funeral ceremonies" (Ibid., and see Daftary, 475).
[82] Daftary, 475 and see Hollister, 368-369. "Even before the 1866 case, we find that the Āqā Khān was instrumental in introducing new prayers, new forms of worship, new taxes as well as inheritance laws" (Amrita Shodhan, "The Entanglement of the Gināns in Khoja Governance," in *Gināns, Texts and Contexts: Essays on Ismaili Hymns from South Asia in Honour of Zawahir Moir*, Rev. ed., eds. Tazim R. Kassam and Françoise Mallison (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), 175).
[83] Daftary 475.
[84] Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 106.
[85] Shackle and Moir, 9.
[86] Daftary, 475-476. "The dissidents, headed by a certain Ḥabīb Ibrāhīm, became known as the Barbhai, or the twelve brethren, because they were originally twelve in number" (Ibid., 475). In this court case, Ahmed Habibbhai whose father was Ḥabīb Ibrāhīm tried to defend the position held by his clique (Ibid., 476).
[87] Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 106.
[88] Nanji, 3.
[89] Daftary, 476 and Nanji, 3. "This judgement legally established the status of the Nizārī Khojās as a community of 'Shī'ah Imāmī Ismā'īlīs,' and of the Āqā Khān as the *murshid* or spiritual head of that community and heir in lineal descent to the Imāms of the Alamūt period. It also established, for the first time in a British court, the rights of the Āqā Khān to all the customary dues collected from the Khojās, and placed all the community property of the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs in his name and under his absolute control. The first Āqā Khān's authority was never seriously challenged again" (Daftary, 476).

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community, he also saw to it that irrespective of their sect, each and every Muslim should be cared for.[92] In addition, as was the manner of his predecessor, the Ni'mat Allāhī Ṣūfīs remained important to him.[93] His Imāmate was cut short, as in 1885, pneumonia took his life.[94] At the age of eight, his son, Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh al-Ḥusaynī,[95] Āqā Khān III (b. 1877 in Karachi), became the Imām.[96] What follows is an "Enthronement Hymn" (*Mubāraki dhaṇi salāmat je takhat ji*):

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O 'Alī, in the fair assembly gloriously adorned, with carpets spread upon the floor,
Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh the Lord has ascended the throne. Blessed be your rule today!
Blessed be your rule, o light of 'Alī's eyes! Blessed be your rule, o Lord, descendant
of the Prophet! Blessed, blessed be your rule today! O 'Alī, to gain vision of
you, Lord, your entire Indian community has come. They duly present their
offerings, Lord, devoting their lives to you. O 'Alī, from the First Day
your fortune has bestowed greatness upon you. Lord, from
the lips of Lord 'Alī Shāh there issued the words:
'Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh is the Lord.'
O 'Alī, to call you 'Lord' is your due, for you bear the signs of
noble fortune on your brow. At this young age your rank
is lofty, betokening your greatness. O 'Alī, blessed be your royal
throne and umbrella, o beloved descendant of the Lady Zahrā'.
Your power comes from the father of Lord Ḥasan, enhancing your glory.
O 'Alī, at the news of your coronation, light pours down from heaven.
With plates of pearls in their hands, the houris shower
offerings upon the Lord. O 'Alī, when the believers in the
guest-house celebrate this occasion as at *'Īd* [*Eid*],[97]
they recite the Shamsī[98] prayer and experience the
delights of spiritual enlightenment. O 'Alī, to offer you his
congratulations, this Sayyid submits his humble prayer: may the
Lord of Najaf be your protector, and may your enemies be destroyed![99]

[90] Ibid., 509.
[91] Ibid., 477.
[92] Ibid. He "...promoted educational and philanthropic projects for the benefit of all Indian Muslims" (Ibid.).
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., 480.
[95] "The Right Honourable Sir" (See Hollister, 371).
[96] Daftary, 480. "[T]he forty-eighth Qāsim-Shāhī Nizārī Imām" (Ibid.).
[97] "The Islāmic calendar reflects the social and spiritual aspects of Islām and helps to keep them in harmony. There are two festivals: *Eid al-Fitr* [*'Īd al-Fiṭr*], the Festival of Charity or the feast of breaking the Ramaḍān fast, and *Eid al-Adha* [*'Īd al-Aḍḥā*], the Festival of Sacrifice. *Eid* [*'Īd*] itself means 'festival' or 'time of happiness' in Arabic, and on both occasions people send each other greetings cards, like Christmas and New Year cards" (Akbar S. Ahmed, *Islam Today: A Short Introduction to the Muslim World* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2002), 39).
[98] Shackle and Moir, 257. "*[Ś]amasi jo salavāt*: a reference to the distinctive Ismā'īlī prayers, here so named presumably through association with Pīr Shams" (Ibid., 166).
[99] Ibid., 82-83. "This hymn of praise to the Imām is sung in the congregation every year on Imāmate Day, celebrating the anniversary of the current Āqā Khān's accession. With the accession of Āqā Khān IV in 1957, the words *mahamad śāhā* [Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh al-Ḥusaynī, Āqā Khān III,] were changed to *karim śāhā* [Karīm al-Ḥusaynī, Āqā Khān IV]. Together with its language, a quite highly Persianized if inaccurate Hindustānī, the

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Not all in the community paid him homage. Dissension still loomed large in his Bombay *jamā'at*. For example, in 1905 the Imām was in East Africa where the community also has a presence.[100] During his stay in East Africa, his cousin, Ḥājjī Bībī,[101] along with other relatives residing in the subcontinent alleged that he [i.e., the Imām] and they were actually Twelver Shī'ī (*Ithnā'asharī*). In addition, they did not recognize him to be a "Shī'ī Imām," but considered him to be a "traditional Ṣūfī *pīr*."[102] Being his relatives, they felt that in addition to their right to a part of the *dassondh* given to him by his disciples,[103] they should also be entitled to a part of Āqā Khān I's assets.[104]

> [T]he testimony of the head of the [Indian Ismā'īlī] community in Pañjāb, during the 'Haji Bibi Case'...observed that they [Indian Ismā'īlīs] still continued to recite the Hindu names in the *du'ā'*,[105] to intermarry with the Sikhs, and to burn their dead, in order to conceal their identity and avoid persecution.[106]

Justice Coram Russell in 1908 pronounced his decision, which in turn secured for the Āqā Khān not only the religious dues given to him by the Nizārī community, but also the assets of Āqā

anonymous signature *sayad* suggests this *gínān* may have been composed by a member of one of the several Irānian Sayyid families related to Āqā Khān I who settled with him in Bombay and Poona [/Puṇe]. It was probably composed in 1885 when Sir Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh[,] Āqā Khān III[,]...ascended the throne of the Imāmate as a boy, after the premature death of his father[,] Āqā 'Alī Shāh[,] Āqā Khān II, although there is an alternative tradition that it was composed on the slightly later occasion of Āqā Khān III's first marriage. At all events, this is the most recently composed of all the recognized hymns" (Ibid., 165).

[100] See Daftary, 481.

[101] Ibid.

[102] See Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 106. "[A] suit was filed against him [i.e., the Āqā Khān III] in the Bombay High Court..." (Daftary, 481).

[103] Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 106.

[104] Daftary, 481.

[105] "The older prayer, now withdrawn from circulation, was the *Duā* (Ar[abic] *du'ā'*). Although attributed to Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, this prayer would in fact appear to have been formulated by Pīr Dādū. It consisted of formulas in Sindhī, supplications to the Imām, and the lists of Imāms and Pīrs...Since the reform of 1952, it has been replaced by a new Arabic *Duā*, comprising various *Qur'ānic* verses and the genealogy of the Imāms, but not including the former list of Pīrs" (Shackle and Moir, 13).

[106] Nanji, 25. "[During the time of the Āqā Khān III,] [m]any Khojā women, as many other Muslim women, continue[d] to consult the Brahmin priests in regard to omens, and some still worship[ed] Hindu gods" (See Hollister, 410). "[K.B. Fazalullah Luftullah] Faridi divides the Khojās into seven divisions: (i) Khedwaya-Mōmna Khojās, (ii) Gujar-Guptī Khojās, (iii) Multāni Khojās, (iv) Atlai-Khurāsāni Khojās, (v) Mochi Mōmna Khojās, (vi) Soni-Lohar Khojās[,] and (vii) Kābuli and Badakhshāni Khojās" (See ibid., 396 and 432).

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Khān I.[107] Since the outcome was not what they had expected, a number within the community relinquished their ties with the Āqā Khān and created the Khojā Ithnā'asharī religion, a new introduction under the umbrella that is Shī'ī Islām.[108]

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In Mahārāṣṭra, the Āqā Khān III invited a number of low caste members of society known as Bhangis to become members of the Ismā'īlī community.[109] Like his predecessors, the Imām was interested in bettering the lives of his *murīdān*. His *firmans/farmāns* ("written directives")[110] bear testimony to his commitment to the welfare of his disciples.[111] For the youth in his community, he established places of learning.[112]

After a reign of seventy-two years, Āqā Khān III passed away in 1957.[113] His will designated Karīm, the son of Aly Khān, as Imām of the community.[114] Like the Imāms before him, His Highness Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī, Āqā Khān IV, who is the forty-ninth Imām[115] of the Shī'ah Imāmī Ismā'īlī Muslims is responsible for the material and spiritual welfare of his worldwide *murīdān*.[116]

[107] Daftary, 481.

[108] Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 106. "As a result of these schisms [Sunnī Khojās and Khojā Ithnā'asharīs] and legal decisions [('the Aga Khan Case of 1866') and ('the Haji Bibi Case')], the identity of those Khojās who remained loyal to the Āqā Khān was being clearly differentiated from that of the Sunnīs and the Ithnā'asharīs alike, the cornerstone of which was allegiance to a living Ismā'īlī Imām" (Ibid., 106-107).

[109] See Dominique-Sila Khan, "Diverting the Ganges: The Nizari Ismaili Model of Conversion in South Asia," in *Religious Conversion in India: Modes, Motivations, and Meanings*, eds. Rowena Robinson and Sathianathan Clarke (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 46. "[U]ntouchable Bhangis (scavengers)" (Ibid.).

[110] Daftary, 487.

[111] Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 110-111.

[112] Ibid., 112. "Founded as early as 1903, these schools were initially called 'Sindhī' because the students were taught Khojkī or Khwāja Sindhī, the special script of the Khojās in which religious material was recorded" (Ibid.). Additional renderings (Khōjkī, or Khwājā Sindhī) (See Nanji, 8).

[113] Daftary, 496 and 509.

[114] Ibid., 496. "In accordance with Āqā Khān III's last will and testament, made in 1955, his grandson[,] Karīm[,] succeeded to the Imāmate as the forty-ninth Mawlānā Ḥāḍir Imām of the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs" (Ibid., and see Michel Boivin, *La rénovation du Shî'isme Ismaélien en Inde et au Pakistan: D'après les ecrits et les discours de Sulṭān Muḥammad Shah Aga Khan (1902-1954)* (Abingdon, Oxon: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 427-428).

[115] Daftary, 496 and 509.

[116] Ibid., 504. The Ismā'īlīs reside "...in more than twenty-five countries..." (Ibid.). "As Imām of the Ismā'īlīs, the Āqā Khān firmly believes that in Islām *dīn* and *dunyā* – 'religion and world' – are not to be treated as separate realms but constantly intersect and interact, with the pursuit of material gain framed within the calculus of ethical concern" (Malise Ruthven, "The Aga Khan Development Network and Institutions," in *A Modern History of*

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MISSION

As noted, in 909 the Fāṭimids founded their dynasty in North Africa. Interestingly enough, the *dā'īs* of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* were already active in Sind ("Pakistani Sind") and Hind ("modern India") which were part of the twelve Islands (*jazā'ir*) for conversion (SEE FIGURE 1).[117] These *dā'īs* were usually active in places where the populace consisted of both Muslims and Hindus.[118] In his *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* ("Collection of Histories"), which was made available in the 14th century, i.e., in 1310, Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh (d. 1318)[119] writes that in the area of Qandahār and Khurāsān, i.e., near Sind,[120] a few of Imām Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl's (b. c. 738)[121] sons were situated there.[122] To further corroborate the existence of the *da'wah* in India before

the Ismailis: Continuity and Change in a Muslim Community, ed. Farhad Daftary (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011), 191).

[117] Nanji, 5 and Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 37. "[T]he list of these twelve *da'wah* regions, commonly referred to as the 'islands of the earth' (*jazā'ir al-arḍ*)...[are noted] in only one Fāṭimid source, namely, an esoteric work by al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān dating to the...10th century. According to this source, the twelve *jazā'ir* in the author's time were: al-'Arab (Arabs), al-Rūm (Byzantines), al-Ṣaqāliba (Slavs), al-Nūb (Nubians), al-Khazar (Khazars), al-Hind (India), al-Sind (Sind), al-Zanj (Africans), al-Ḥabash (Abyssinians), al-Ṣīn (Chinese), al-Daylam (Daylam, probably for Persians), and al-Barbar (Berbers)" (Daftary, 217-218). "Many *Purāṇas*, including the relatively early *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, describe a flat disk of earth, which is itself composed of a series of circles. These are in fact seven concentric islands that keep doubling in size as one moves outward. (The first is an actual circle, and the concentric islands are ring-shaped). The Islands are separated from each other by a series of oceans, each of which has the width of the island it encircles" (See W. Randolph Kloetzli and Laurie Louise Patton, s.v. Cosmology: Hindu Cosmology, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 3: Cabasilas, Nicholas – Cyrus II, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 2017).

[118] See Nanji, 23.

[119] Daftary, 305-306. "...Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh...[was] often referred to by his contemporaries as Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb" (Ibid., 305). He was a "...historian, physician[,] and statesman..." (Ibid). "Being of Jewish origin,...[he] converted to Islām and rose in the service of the Mongol Īlkhāns of Persia to the rank of vizier, a position he held for almost twenty years until his execution in...1318" (Ibid.).

[120] Nanji, 33.

[121] Daftary, 95. According to the *Dastūr al-munajjimīn*, Imām Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl was born on November 739 (Ibid.).

[122] Nanji, 33. "De Goeje, quoting both Juwaynī and the author of *Dustūr al-munajjimīn*, states that some of the sons of [Imām] Muḥammad [b. Ismā'īl] went to Qandahār on the borders of India, and it may well be that they and their descendants became advocates of Ismā'īlism in India. He also says that [Imām] Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl himself went to India, a statement supported by other sources" (Hollister, 206). "Sectarian works speak of the *da'wah* maintained by [Imām] Muḥammad [b. Ismā'īl] through *dā'īs*. 'The world became alive with propaganda and his influence spread.' 'He spread religious knowledge, explained esoteric doctrines, and revealed to the chosen ones the great mystery'" (Ibid.).

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the Fāṭimids settled in North Africa, he also notes that there were Fāṭimid *dā'īs* there.[123] The

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Fāṭimid Imām-Caliph, al-Mu'izz's (r. 953-975)[124] legal scholar, al-Qāḍī Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān b. Muḥammad b. Manṣūr b. Aḥmad b. Ḥayyūn al-Tamīmī al-Maghribī[125] (c. 903-974),[126] notes that the *dā'ī*, Ibn Ḥawshab Manṣūr al-Yaman[127] (d. 914),[128] dispatched his nephew, *dā'ī* al-Haytham, on a *da'wah* to Sind, who is said to have entered the province in 883.[129] From Sind the *da'wah* made its way to Hind.[130] It was approximately five years after al-Mu'izz became the Fāṭimid Imām-Caliph in 953 that "...a Fāṭimid vassal state was founded in Sind...with its seat at Multān...."[131]

> An epistle from [the Fāṭimid Imām-Caliph,] al-Mu'izz [r. 953-975,][132] to the chief *dā'ī* in Sind, 'where he had a powerful following,' shows not only how far flung Fāṭimid propaganda was, but the fact that this epistle was from the Imām indicates how personal an interest he took in the problems of the *da'wah*.[133]

In the tenth century, Abū'l-Qāsim b. Ḥawqal[134] who visited Sind notes that Sindhī and Arabic were spoken there.[135] Due to the different religious backgrounds of those who had joined the Ismā'īlī fold in Sind and in order to consolidate Fāṭimid authority there, the Fāṭimid Imām-Caliph, al-Mu'izz, was adamant in making sure the new members did not continue to embrace

[123] Abbas H. al-Hamdani, *The Beginnings of the Ismā'īlī Da'wa in Northern India* (Cairo: Sirović Bookshop, 1956), 1.
[124] Daftary, 133. Hollister notes the death date of the Fāṭimid Imām-Caliph, al-Mu'izz, as 973 (Hollister, 339).
[125] Daftary, 168. "Destined to become the greatest Ismā'īlī jurist of all time, al-Nu'mān came from a learned family of Mālikī Sunnīs in Qayrawān" (Ibid.).
[126] Ibid., 169.
[127] Nanji, 33-34.
[128] Daftary, 6.
[129] al-Hamdani, 1 and Nanji, 33-34. Abbas H. al-Hamdani notes that *dā'ī* al-Haytham was sent to Sind in 883 (al-Hamdani, 1).
[130] Ibid.
[131] Daftary, 166. "[I]n modern Pakistani Pañjāb" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 35).
[132] Daftary, 133.
[133] Hollister, 227.
[134] "[A] geographer and traveler" (Daftary, 725). He was of Arab descent (See Nanji, 8).
[135] Ibid.

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their previous religions simultaneously with their newly acquired Islāmic religion.[136] Being in

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Multān in 985, al-Muqaddasī[137] relates that

> '[t]he people of Multān are Shī'ah...In Multān, the *Khuṭbah* is read in the name of the Fāṭimid [Imām-]Caliph of Egypt and the place is administered by his orders. Gifts are regularly sent from here to Egypt.'[138] 'Multān is smaller than Manṣūrah in size, but has a larger population. Fruits are not found in plenty; yet they are sold cheaper...Like Sīrāf, Multān has wooden homes. There is no bad conduct and drunkenness here, and people convicted of these crimes are punished by death or by some heavy sentence. Business is fair and honest. Travellers are looked after well. Most of the inhabitants are Arabs. They live by a river. The place abounds in vegetation and wealth. Trade flourishes here. Good manners and good living are noticed everywhere. The Government is just [('an Ismā'īlī ruler [was] governing the town')].[139] Women of the town are modestly dressed with no make-up and hardly found talking to anyone in the streets. The water is healthy and the standard of living high. There is happiness, well-being and culture here. Persian is understood. Profits of business are high. People are healthy, but the town is not clean. Houses are small. The climate is warm and arid. The people are of darkish complexion...In Multān, the coin is minted on the style of the Fāṭimid Egyptian coin, but Qanharī coins are commonly used.'[140]

During the governorship of the Ismā'īlī *dā'ī*, Abū'l-Futūḥ Dā'ūd b. Naṣr,[141] Multān in 1005 was taken over by Maḥmūd of Ghazna[142] (d. 1030) whose predecessor was Amīr Sabuktagīn.[143] "Tiring of the seven days siege of the town laid by Maḥmūd, Abū'l-Futūḥ agreed to pay tribute to the Sulṭān and Maḥmūd returned to Ghazna."[144] It was only five years later, i.e., in 1010, that the Ghaznavids made their way back to Multān, captured the *dā'ī*, Abū'l-Futūḥ, and put to

[136] Ibid., 35-36. "By establishing a principality, linked to a thriving trade and cemented by a common ideology and allegiance, the Fāṭimids hoped to build their cohesive confederation of states; in this light it is easier to understand why the insistence on a strict adherence to a common system of beliefs was so important and necessary" (Ibid., 36).

[137] "al-Muqaddasī (eigentlich: al-Maqdisī), Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, aus Jerusalem stammender Reisender und Geograph, besuchte in frühfatimidischer Zeit Kairo..." (Heinz Halm, *Die Kalifen von Kairo: Die Fatimiden in Ägypten 973-1074* (München: C.H. Beck Gedruckt mit Unterstützung von The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, 2003), 476).

[138] al-Hamdani, 3-4 and see Nanji, 34.

[139] al-Hamdani, 3. al-Hamdani notes that the *dā'ī*, Jalam (Ḥilm) b. Shaybān, was the governor of Multān (Ibid.).

[140] Ibid., 5.

[141] He succeeded his grandfather, Shaykh Ḥamīd whose father was "probably" Jalam b. Shaybān (Ibid., 4).

[142] A "Sunnī ruler of Afghanistan" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 30).

[143] al-Hamdani, 4.

[144] Ibid.

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death a number of Ismā'īlīs.[145] Important to note here is that the *dā'īs*-governors[146] of the Ismā'īlī state of Multān came from an Arab background.[147] After Multān was sacked, the Ismā'īlīs relocated to Manṣūrah[148] which was established by the Umayyad leader,[149] Muḥammad b. Qāsim's son, 'Amr, in the period of 728 and 737.[150] In 854, 'Amr b. 'Abd al-'Azīz established the Sunnī Habbārī Qurayshid reign there.[151] In 1010 Manṣūrah came under Ismā'īlī control.[152] It remained so until it was sacked by Maḥmūd of Ghazna in 1025.[153] This was not the end of the Ismā'īlīs, as they found a new home under the Sūmras in Sind.[154] Like dynasties before them, the Sūmra dynasty did not withstand the test of time. The Sammas, who were Sunnī Muslims, appear to have ended the reign of the Sūmras in the period of 1351 and 1360.[155]

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[145] Ibid. "The persecution of the Ismā'īlīs by Maḥmūd is attested to by the theologian[,] al-Baghdādī (d...1037), who says that the Ismā'īlīs of Multān were massacred in thousands by Maḥmūd" (Ibid., 5). "So came to an end the Ismā'īlī rule in Multān. It had lasted from...[867]...to...[1010] – about half a century" (Ibid., 4). "Although the conversion of Multān's Majūs to Ismā'īlism took place in...[958], Ismā'īlīs did not become rulers of the city until...[965], when *dā'ī* Jalam b. Shaybān overthrew the Banū Sāma prince" (Ibid.).

[146] "[T]hree rulers" (Ibid.).

[147] Ibid. "S. Nadvī considers the Ismā'īlī rulers as pure Arabs on the evidence of early Arab geographers and the very nature of their names, and rejects the fantastic theory of Firishta that they belonged to the Pathān Lodhi family" (Ibid.).

[148] See ibid., 7.

[149] See Reza Shah-Kazemi, *The Spirit of Tolerance in Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2012), 60.

[150] al-Hamdani, 6.

[151] Ibid., 7.

[152] See ibid., 7-8.

[153] See ibid.

[154] Ibid., 8. "The Sūmras were a local Sindhī Hindu tribe who had been converted to Islām...and...ruled Sind from...[1051] till after...[1351]" (Ibid., 8 and 11). "Even after conversion[,] they had retained many of their old Hindu customs, like having their meals exclusively among themselves and not with any outsider" (Ibid., 8). "[The Sūmras] were thought to have been Rājpūt converts to Islām, but recent researches of M. Abdul Halim Sharar of Lucknow have led him to the conclusion that they were Jewish converts to Islām who, coming to Sind from Iraq, adopted the Qarmaṭian articles of faith and held power over the province of Sind until the middle of the...[fourteenth] century..." (Hollister, 347). "Such a motley religion was that of the Qarmaṭīs and the Ismā'īlīs who made a juxtaposition of Islām with local customs and beliefs" (Citied in ibid., 348). "What kind of Ismā'īlīs were the Sūmras then? To my mind, after the Nizārid-Musta'lian split among the Ismā'īlīs in...[1094,] the Sūmras drifted away from both the rival *Da'wahs*; separating from these *Da'wahs*, made themselves quite independent. They just kept up the Fāṭimid Ismā'īlī tradition of their forefathers without paying any allegiance to any *Da'wah* outside. They had a sort of Ismā'īlism of their own, which kept them neutral from the Sunnī Islām brought by the Turkish conquerors and their Hindu environment. However, whatever kind of Ismā'īlī tradition they kept up, helped in the later Nizārid mission in Northern India particularly under Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, who died near Uchchh in...1471" (al-Hamdani, 16).

[155] Ibid., 14.

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As the Imāms moved from Fāṭimid Egypt to Alamūt, the designation of the missionaries sent to the subcontinent eventually changed from the Arabic *dā'ī* ("one who calls")[156] to the Persian *pīr*.[157] Beginning in the 11th century,[158] *pīrs* and *sayyids*[159] were dispatched[160] on a "Daylamī mission"[161] to spread Ismā'īlism[162] in the subcontinent.[163] They were interested in attracting the uneducated and poor members of society.[164] During this period, *dā'īs* were also being sent to Syria, Central Asia, and Irān.[165] Ismā'īlī history notes that Satgur Nūr was "the earliest Nizārī missionary or *pīr* sent from Persia to India"[166] by Ḥasan II *'alā dhikrihi 'l-salām*[167]

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[156] Hollister, 261.
[157] "The *da'wah* came to be called 'the new teaching [('preaching')],' *al-da'wah al-jadīdah*" (Ibid., 307 and Daftary, 714).
[158] Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 96. Kassam notes that the *pīrs* "...came to the Indian subcontinent between the eleventh and twentieth centuries CE..." (See Kassam, *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance*, 2).
[159] "The period 1500-1850 may appropriately be termed the age of the Sayyids" (Shackle and Moir, 8).
[160] "[O]n behalf of the Ismā'īlī Imāms residing in Irān" (Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 96).
[161] "[P]robably from the Alamūt period onwards, the 'new mission' (the Nizārī *da'wah*) had started to spread into the Indian subcontinent, where it was referred to by various names, such as the Nizārī religion, the Daylamī mission[,] and the *Sat Panth* (lit. 'true path'), an equivalent of the Arabic *dīn al-ḥaqq*, an allusion to the priority of inner, esoteric meaning of religion or *bāṭin* over the apparent one or *ẓāhir*" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 31).
[162] See Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 96.
[163] See Kassam, *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance*, 2. "The activities of the Ismā'īlī *da'wah* (mission) were mainly concentrated in the northwestern area of the subcontinent, including the provinces of Sind, Pañjāb, Multān, Gujarāt and Mālwā, Kashmīr, and present-day Rājasthān, Kutch, and Kāṭhiāwāḍ [/Kāṭhiāwār]" (Ibid.). "...Ismā'īlism must have penetrated from Irān along the major trade routes which, before the creation of the Bombay harbour and the 1947 Partition, were mainly caravan roads crossing Sind, Pañjāb and Rājasthān, to Gujarāt or Delhī and the Ganges [Gaṅgā] Valley. These routes enabled not only the movement of goods, but also of men and ideas" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 37-38). "In order to avoid the infelicitous 'North South Asia,' the terms 'north India' and 'western India' will here include Gujarāt, Rājasthān, Mahārāṣṭra, Pañjāb as well as Sind in Pakistan" (Samira Sheikh, "Religious Traditions and Early Ismā'īlī History in Western India: Some Historical Perspectives on Satpanthī Literature and the Gināns," in *Gināns, Texts and Contexts: Essays on Ismaili Hymns from South Asia in Honour of Zawahir Moir*, Rev. ed., eds. Tazim R. Kassam and Françoise Mallison (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), 161). "Ismā'īlism in western India has many of the characteristics of medieval belief-systems which arose outside the purview of state patronage. This may have something to do with the fact that Ismā'īlī beliefs were disseminated among merchants, pastoralists, peasants[,] and lower-status occupational castes over a wide geographical area" (Ibid., 154).
[164] Ali S. Asani, "The Ismaili Gināns as Devotional Literature," in *Devotional Literature in South Asia: Current Research, 1985-1988*, ed. R.S. McGregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 102. "Their target population, largely consisting of the lower and illiterate classes of rural Gujarāt, Sind, and Pañjāb, seems to have been heavily influenced by the Vaiṣṇava Hindu tradition" (Ibid.). "[T]he agricultural and trading similes that abound in the *ginānṣ* show that the message was directed more towards Hindu groups in the intermediate castes and that the bulk of the early work was done in Sind, rather than Gujarāt, where the Ṭayyibī *da'wah* was already well established" (Nanji, 69).
[165] See Shackle and Moir, 5.
[166] See Daftary, 442. "...Satgur Nūr was mainly active in Pātan, Gujarāt" (See ibid.). "The first Pīr to be mentioned by the Nizārī tradition of the subcontinent is Nūr Muḥammad, also named Satgur Nūr, Nūr Satgur, Pīr Ṣadāt, or

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(d. 1166)[168] in the latter part of the twelfth century.[169] His mission focused on attracting Hindus to the Ismā'īlī religion.[170]

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No longer having Alamūt as the base of their mission, the *pīrs* were somewhat independent.[171] The *pīr* tradition was kept alive from within the *pīr* line[172] until the death of Pīr Tāj al-Dīn who passed away in the latter part of the fifteenth century.[173] During the reign of Imām Qāsim Shāh, Pīr Shams al-Dīn[174] (d. 1356)[175] was sent on a *da'wah*[176] to Kutch,[177] Sind,[178] Pañjāb, Kashmīr, and Bengal.[179] "Imām [Qāsim] Shāh summoned

Sadaji" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 40). "...Nūr al-Dīn...took the name of Nūr Satgur, the name meaning teacher of true light" (Hollister, 351). "...Nūr Muḥammad was equally known as Satgur Nūr (from *satguru*, the 'true guide'). According to my hypothesis he was called Gusainji in Rājasthān and Matang Rishi among the untouchables of Gujarāt" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 48). "If the Khojā tradition is trustworthy, he must have left Alamūt shortly before...1166, reaching Pātan in Gujarāt from Daylam soon after. [Sir Thomas W.] Arnold says that he reached Gujarāt during the reign of Sidhraj Jai Sing,...1094-1143. Following Khojā history, F.L. Faridi puts the arrival of Nūr Satgur almost a century later, in the reign of Bhīma II, 1179-1242. The chronogram on the tomb of Nūr Satgur at Navsārī, Gujarāt, gives the date of his death as...1094" (Hollister, 351 and 417). "[His] tomb is said to be located in Navsārī (coastal south Gujarāt)" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 40).

[167] "The history of religious ideas shows abundantly that messianic expectations usually end in disillusion, as the return of the Messiah or the Mahdī is forever postponed and redemption becomes an increasingly unattainable goal for their followers. But this was not apparently the case with the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs, because forty years after Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's death, their long-awaited Imām emerged from concealment at a dramatic ceremony at Alamūt. His name was also Ḥasan, but owing to his special status[,] the Ismā'īlīs always pronounce his name with the honorific expression '*'alā dhikrihi 'l-salām*,' 'on whose mention be peace.' In order to avoid confusing him with Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, he is sometimes also referred to by historians as Ḥasan II" (Peter Willey, *Eagle's Nest: Ismaili Castles in Iran and Syria* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005), 65).

[168] Hollister, 315 and Daftary, 509.

[169] See Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 40.

[170] Nanji, 66.

[171] See ibid., 70-71.

[172] See ibid. "As suggested by their Hindu names, the Nizārī preachers[']' claim to have played a role, during their former incarnations, in the Epic and Purāṇic history...As for [Pīr] Tāj al-Dīn, it is suggested that he was Prahlāda, the demon-devotee saved by Narasiṃha, Viṣṇu's incarnation as man-lion. On the other hand[,] in some *ginān*s[,] all the main Pīrs are said to be *avatāras* of Brahmā" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 49).

[173] Daftary, 445. Pīr Tāj al-Dīn's "...grave is located in Jhun in Sind" (Ibid.).

[174] Ibid., 442. "...Pīr Shams al-Dīn Sabzawārī...traced his descent to Imām Ismā'īl through Sayyid Hashamalī b. Aḥmad Hādī who had gone to Cairo from the Yaman. Hashamalī's mother was Khairan Nisa, who also traced her genealogy to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. It was Hashamalī who was entrusted to accompany Shāh Hādī, son of Imām Nizār[,] from Cairo to Alamūt. A strong group of these Ismā'īlī *Sayyids* moved from Cairo to Sabzawār in Irān and Pīr Shams al-Dīn was from that colony" (Hollister, 332-333). "Pīr Shams al-Dīn Sabzawārī has been confused with Shams-i Tabrīzī. This latter was 'spiritual master' of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, who wrote a book of poems in his honour, entitled *Dīwān of Shams-i Tabrīz*, which has been edited and translated by R.A. Nicholson. He was the son of 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad of Alamūt, and left that fortress before its destruction, and even before Shams al-Dīn, the son of Rukn al-Dīn[,] had left. He also attained recognition as a saint, but he apparently did not go to India" (Ibid.,

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> him to his presence and investing him with the *masnad*[180] of a Pīr to carry on the Ismā'īlī mission in countries beyond the boundaries of Irān. When starting for the work entrusted to him, Pīr Shams presented himself in the presence of the holy Imām, kissed his hand and was blessed. When he reached Badakhshān, a large number of people came to see him and being convinced accepted the Ismā'īlian faith and swore allegiance to Imām Qāsim Shāh, the Lord of the Age. Pīr Shams left Badakhshān for Minor Tibet, where he stayed for a few days to carry on his mission. In this way passing through Ghazna, Chenab and Anil Nagari, he travelled by way of Hindu Kush, and the impenetrable Pamirs and reached Kashmīr. In all these travels he steadfastly stuck to his work, even though many a time he could not get any food at any price and had to starve. Bearing all these difficulties with an unflinching heart, he at last succeeded in reaching his destination, settled at Kashmīr, learned local languages, and thus was able to preach to the people in their own tongues."[181]

Pīr Shams al-Dīn's mission concentrated on the conversion of Hindus and Muslims.[182] The Ismā'īlī tradition notes that during the reign of Imām Islām Shāh,[183] Pīr Shams al-Dīn's great-grandson, Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn[184] (b. 1290,[185] d. in the period of 1369 and 1416),[186] was inviting Hindus to become adherents of the Ismā'īlī religion "...in the socio-political context of the fourteenth

333). "In Rājasthān, as my field research has shown, Pīr Shams was called Samik Rishi or Samas Rishi" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 48).

[175] Hollister, 355 and see Kassam, *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance*, 78.

[176] See Hollister, 333 and see Daftary, 442.

[177] Françoise Mallison, "Muslim Devotional Literature in Gujarati: Islam and Bhakti," in *Devotional Literature in South Asia: Current Research, 1985-1988*, ed. R.S. McGregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 90.

[178] Daftary, 442. "Multān and Uchchh, in Sind" (Ibid.). Pīr Shams al-Dīn "...was probably among the first to sow the seeds of the Nizārī *da'wah* in Sind" (Nanji, 67-68).

[179] Sheikh, 150. "Pīr Shams was active in Sind and Pañjāb and is also believed to have carried the message to Kashmīr and Bengal" (Ibid.).

[180] "مسند *masnad* (pl. *masāned*) lit. trône; siège || dignité, position élevée" (Jean Jacques Pierre Desmaisons, s.v. Masnad, *Dictionnaire persan-français*: K-M, vol. 3 (Rome: Typ. Polyglotte de la S.C. de Propagande, 1913), 397).

[181] Hollister, 333.

[182] Nanji, 66. "Those converted by Pīr Shams came to be designated as Shamsīs or Shamsīyas...Since they were secret followers of the Ismā'īlī religion, Shamsīs have been also referred to as *Guptīs* (lit. secret)–a designation, we must insist, for all Nizārīs practising *taqiyyah* and hiding their real identity, and not for a particular branch of Ismā'īlism, as has been erroneously stated" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 41).

[183] According to the Āqā Khān III, "[i]n India, certain Hindu tribes were converted by missionaries sent to them by...[the Āqā Khān III's] ancestor, Shāh Islām Shāh, and took the name of Khojās..." (Aga Khan III, 181).

[184] "The work of [Pīr] Shams al-Dīn was continued by his son and grandson, [Pīr] Nāṣir al-Dīn and [Pīr] Shihāb (or Ṣāḥib) al-Dīn. Almost nothing is known about these two *pīrs*, who occupy the twenty-first and twenty-second places on the traditional lists of *pīrs*; it is merely reported that they conducted the *da'wah* in secret. Pīr Shihāb al-Dīn was, in turn, succeeded by his son[,] Ṣadr al-Dīn" (Daftary, 443). "[A]ccording to [M.] Hedayetullah, the epithet 'Ṣūfī' is still used in modern times to refer to a Nizārī Pīr: 'the Ṣūfī who made the most valuable contribution towards the interaction between Hindus and the Muslims was an Ismā'īlī missionary named Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn'" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 37 and 277).

[185] Nagib Tajdin, "The Concept of 'God beyond God' in the *Khaṭ Niriñjan* of Pīr Sadardīn: A Personal Exegesis," in *Gināns, Texts and Contexts: Essays on Ismaili Hymns from South Asia in Honour of Zawahir Moir*, Rev. ed., eds. Tazim R. Kassam and Françoise Mallison (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), 187.

[186] Daftary, 443. al-Hamdani notes that "...Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn...died near Uchchh in...1471" (al-Hamdani, 16).

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century."[187] During Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn's mission, the Sammas were in control of Sind.[188] In Koṭṛi, Sind, he founded the very first *jamā'at-khāna*,[189] i.e., *jamā'at-khānas* did not exist anywhere in the subcontinent prior to this one.[190] He is also said to have travelled to Persia to present the *dassondh* to the Imām.[191]

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So as not to be seen as outsiders, the Indian Ismā'īlīs followed Hindu customs (e.g., males were to inherit property and widows were to remain single).[192] During Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn's time, it was also vital for the purpose of identity that one belong to a group.[193] He was ingenious in creating a sort of identity for those who recently converted (e.g., Lohanas and Bhatias).[194] He chose to change the name "*ṭhākur*" ("lord or master") that had been used by

[187] Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 78 and see Nanji, 77. "He was sent to India by Imām Islām Shāh, the son of Imām Qāsim Shāh, and was appointed the head of the Khojās of Kashmīr, the Pañjāb[,] and Sind in...1430" (Hollister, 356). Hollister notes that Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn "...had been trained under Pīr Shams al-Dīn..." (Ibid., 334).

[188] Daftary, 443.

[189] Shī'ī Imāmī Ismā'īlī Muslims attend *jamā'at-khāna*, whereas Sunnī Muslims attend *masjid* (mosque). "The *jamā'at-khāna* is also a Sunnī Ṣūfī institution, though it has a different function as it simply refers to the place where the faithful, the Pīrs and their disciples can gather" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 151).

[190] Daftary, 443.

[191] Ibid. "[I]t is probable that [Pīr] Ṣadr al-Dīn, like later *dā'īs* from India, did undertake such a visit [to present the *dassondh* to the Imām]" (Nanji, 75). According to Mumtaz Ali Tajddin, "[i]n past times, it was difficult to remit the funds of *dassondh* to the Imām, living in Irān. Therefore, Pīr Shams had authorized persons (each called *musāfir* 'traveller') to collect the funds in different villages. The *musāfirs* hence collected and deposited them at the central treasury at Multān, and thence the whole fund was remitted at an appropriate time to Irān. It may be noted that during the Indian *da'wah* period, the *dassondh* collected from each person was 12.50 per cent, 10 per cent of which was separated for the Imām, and the rest (2.50 per cent being the *zakāt*) was retained by the Pīrs as per the instructions of the Imām. With the income of 2.50 per cent, the Ismā'īlī Pīrs could sustain their lives" (Cited in Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 126). "Mumtaz Ali [Tajddin] explains the difference between the *dassondh* proper (tithe, ten per cent of the monthly income). The *zakāt*, paid as charity by all Muslims and the *'ushr* (also a tithe) levied upon the Muslims as a land revenue. The abovementioned three taxes were prevalent among the Ismā'īlīs" (Ibid.). "Foremost among these assessments is the tithe, or *dassondh*. As early as 1430 [, Pīr] Ṣadr al-Dīn passed the 'tythe wallet' for this purpose and numerous references indicate that the principle has been consistently adhered to" (See Hollister, 392). "The *dassondh*, which [Dr. Syed] Mujtaba Ali says is now one-eighth and not one-tenth, falls due on each new moon day, and is deposited in a box or other receptacle placed for it in the *jamā'at-khāna*. The *gināns* and the *Pandiyāt-i javānmardī* all stress the importance of this obligation. The latter threatens this wise: 'If one does not pay one tenth of his income to the Imām, the one tenth turns into fire and the other nine parts into wood and they together burn everything he has into ashes'" (Ibid., 393 and 423).

[192] Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 98.

[193] See ibid.

[194] Ibid.

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the Lohanas by giving the recent converts the name "*khwāja*" ("lord or master").[195] Moreover, since not all businesspeople made use of the same chirography, it comes as no surprise that the Khojās were no exception.[196] They employed "...a refined form of Lohanaki, the script used by the Lohanas...."[197] This they called Khojkī.[198]

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After the death of Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, the pīrship passed to his son,[199] Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn (d. 1449).[200] In Multān during Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn's time resided the Suhrawardī Ṣūfī order with whom he kept close contact.[201] Samira Sheikh notes that "[t]he Ismā'īlīs were in fact among a

[195] Ibid., and see Hollister, 356. "[T]he title '*khwāja*'...[is] a Persian term of which Khojā is a corruption..." (Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 98). "For the converts of this Pīr[,] the full meaning of the term [*khwāja*] is said to be 'the honourable or worshiped converts'" (Hollister, 356). "Before the name of an individual[,] the title '*khwāja*' served to indicate simultaneously occupational (merchant), social and religious identities" (Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 98). "This name [*khwāja*] corresponded to the Hindu term *ṭhākur* (or *ṭhākkar*), meaning master, by which the Hindu Lohanas were addressed, since they were regarded as Kṣatriyas" (Daftary, 443). "[Pīr] Ṣadr al-Dīn was instrumental in winning the Lohanas to the Ismā'īlī faith. Tribal legends represent them as descendants of Lava, the elder son of Rāma, who was the founder of the Rāthors to which the Lohanas belonged" (Hollister, 356). "Mercantile castes have exercised an even greater influence over the development of the Sikh Panth, the community that traces its origins to Nānak, since each of its ten *gurus*, including Nānak himself, belonged to merchant (*khatrī*) families. The Sikh community is by no means restricted to *khatrīs*, however, and its leadership has been shared at least equally by the Pañjābī farming and landowning caste called *jāṭ* " (John Stratton Hawley, s.v. Hindi Religious Traditions, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 6: Goddess Worship – Iconoclasm, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 3986).

[196] Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 98.

[197] Ibid.

[198] Ibid. The "...*khojkī* alphabet...[was] earlier referred [to] as *Gurmukhī*..." (Khan, "Diverting the Ganges," 40). "As is well known, *gurmukhī* also refers to the sacred scripture of the Sikhs. But this similarity, as many other ones, has unfortunately escaped the attention of the specialists of Sikhism who have never taken into account the presence of a strong Ismā'īlī centre in Pañjāb" (Ibid., 52). It is interesting to note here that the Bohras "...have a prayer book known as the *Ṣaḥīfat al-ṣalāt*, written as their other books in the Gujarātī vocabulary with the Arabic script" (Hollister, 287).

[199] "[E]ldest son" (Daftary, 443).

[200] Hollister, 357. "In the *Satveṇi*[,] the date of his death is given as...1449 which Ivanow considers as not improbable. He is buried at a place a mile distant from Uchchh" (Ibid.). "The death dates mentioned for this *pīr* vary from...1449 to...1490-1491, but most probably he died around...1470" (Daftary, 443-444). The *ginān, Janat-puri* ("The City of Paradise"), composed by Sayyid Imām Shāh notes that "[i]t was the year VS [('Vikram Samvat')] 1575, and the month of Kartik, on the seventeenth day of the month that Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn departed this life..." (Shackle and Moir, 138-139 and 205). Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn's 'Hindu name' according to "[t]he Ismā'īlī tradition" "was...Anant-jo-dhani" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 48).

[201] Daftary, 444. "In fact, Pīr [Ḥasan] Kabīr al-Dīn's name appears in the list of the *shaykhs* of this Ṣūfī *ṭarīqah*. Indeed, the available evidence reveals that in India, too, the Nizārīs developed close relations with Ṣūfism. Multān and Uchchh in Sind, in addition to serving as centres of Satpanth Ismā'īlī activities, were the headquarters of the Suhrawardī and Qādirī Ṣūfī orders" (Ibid.).

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number of groups competing for followers, patrons and resources."[202] As can be seen by the choice of words (e.g., *murīd* and *murshid*) used by the Ismā'īlī *pīrs*, there is no doubt that this "facilitated Satpanth-Ṣūfī relations."[203] In Sind, for example, the Khojās and Ṣūfīs lived in communities in which Hindus and Muslims of Sunnī descent were in the majority.[204] Conversely, unlike their time in Persia where *taqiyyah* was important, the Khojās in India according to Farhad Daftary "...were already safeguarded against Sunnī persecution by the Hindu elements which were integral parts of their Satpanth tradition."[205]

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After Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn's death, the Imām[206] instead of selecting one of the Pīr's offspring[207] chose the Pīr's brother, Tāj al-Dīn[208] (d. 1467).[209] Not all of Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn's sons were content with the appointment of their uncle as heir to the pīrship. They themselves were seeking this role.[210] After Pīr Tāj al-Dīn's death, Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn's son[211] by the name of Imām al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. Ḥasan (alias Imām Shāh, d. 1513 in Pīrāna) wanted to become *pīr*, but was not granted this role by the Imām.[212] After Imām al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥīm b.

[202] Sheikh, 152. "Ṣūfīs, it is argued, attracted people to the faith by their simple way of life, their stress on equality, the miracles they were said to perform and their 'syncretic' management of Hindu and Muslim customs and traditions" (Rowena Robinson, "Modes of Conversion to Islam," in *Religious Conversion in India: Modes, Motivations, and Meanings*, eds. Rowena Robinson and Sathianathan Clarke (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 23).

[203] Daftary, 444. "It may be added that close relations between the Khojās and Ṣūfīs of India in post-Alamūt times are also attested to by a lengthy didactic poem in medieval Hindustānī known as *Bujh Nirañjan* (*Knowledge of the One*). As Ali Asani has shown, this long poem about the mystical path actually originated in the Qādirī Ṣūfī circles of Sind and then entered the *gināN* literature of the Khojās, who attribute it to Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn. The Khojā appropriation of this work was doubtless facilitated by the fact that its mystical themes and terms readily lent themselves to Ismā'īlī interpretations even though there are no specifically Ismā'īlī elements in this poem" (Ibid., 444-445).

[204] Ibid., 444. "[I]n contrast to the situation in Persia, the *pīrs* and their Khojā followers may not have consciously and deliberately developed their Ṣūfī connections for *taqiyyah* purposes" (Ibid.).

[205] Ibid.

[206] "Nizārī Imām" (Ibid., 445).

[207] "Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn is said to have had eighteen sons..." (Ibid.).

[208] Ibid.

[209] Hollister, 357.

[210] See Daftary, 445.

[211] "[E]ighteenth and youngest son" (Mallison, "Muslim Devotional Literature in Gujarati," 90).

[212] Daftary, 445 and 727 and see Hollister, 358-359. "[Imām al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. Ḥasan] died...in Pīrāna, the town founded by him near Aḥmadābād, where his shrine is located" (Daftary, 445). Hollister notes the death date

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Ḥasan's death, his son,[213] Nar (Nūr) Muḥammad (d. 1533-1534), established the Imām-Shāhī sect in Gujarāt and Khāndesh.[214] According to Christopher Shackle and Zawahir Moir, "...the term Satpanthī or 'Followers of the True Path...' used in the *ginān*s to describe all Ismā'īlīs...came to be particularly reserved for the Imām-Shāhīs," hence the name Imām-Shāhī Satpanthīs.[215] As can been seen, the right of succession not only posed a problem after the death of an Ismā'īlī Imām, but also after the death of an Ismā'īlī *pīr*, which resulted in schism within the community. Dominique-Sila Khan notes:

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> At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Nizārī *da'wah* of the subcontinent was gradually reaching its peak. But then it suffered a serious setback. The Imām residing in Persia had lost control over some local communities and the Imām-Shāhī schism considerably weakened the *daw'ah*. The Imām-Shāhīs and the so-called Kadiwala Sayyids (those who had remained faithful to the Persian Imām) started to fight for control over the various Ismā'īlī communities and to win new converts. This period was characterized by a great confusion.[216]

The nomination of Ismā'īlī *pīrs* was put on hold.[217] In lieu, a piece entitled *Pandiyāt-i javānmardī*[218] ("precepts of manhood")[219] made its way to Sind.[220] According to the Ismā'īlī

and location of the mausoleum as "...1512 at Pīrāna, near the village of Girmatha, some nine miles from Aḥmadābād..." (Hollister, 359). According to Christopher Shackle and Zawahir Moir, "Imām Shāh is credited with a very large number of *ginān*s, in which he is loosely given the title 'Pīr'. He is, however, no longer accorded this status among the Khojās, who nowadays give him the lesser title 'Sayyid'. The controversial status of Imām Shāh stems from the secession launched by his son Sayyid Nar [Nūr] Muḥammad Shāh (d. 1533), credited with three long and important *ginān*s, who proclaimed that Imām Shāh was not merely Pīr or Sayyid, but Imām, and that the tithes should be remitted to himself as his father's successor" (See Shackle and Moir, 7-8).

[213] "[E]ldest son" (Daftary, 445).

[214] Ibid., 445-447 and see Shackle and Moir, 8. "Nar [Nūr] Muḥammad...was buried in his father's mausoleum in Pīrāna" (Daftary, 446). "[T]he seat of [the Imām-Shāhī sect]...is in the vicinity of Aḥmadābād at Pīrāna" (Mallison, "Muslim Devotional Literature in Gujarati," 90).

[215] See Shackle and Moir, 8. See "...four Imām-Shāhī sects known as Imām-Shāhīs, Panchias, Sathias[,] and Athias..." (Khan, "Diverting the Ganges," 45). "[Nizārism] was mainly known by the Hindu appellation of *Sat Panth* (lit. the 'true path' or the 'true sect'), which may be regarded as an equivalent of the Arabic *dīn al-ḥaqq*, the true religion, as also *ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, the right path, used to designate Ismā'īlism in other contexts and emphasizing the priority of esoteric interpretation (*bāṭin*) over the exoteric (*ẓāhir*)" (Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 44-45).

[216] Ibid., 160. It must be noted that "[t]he different groups of Nizārī converts were variously known as Shamsīs, Maulāis, Khojās, Satpanthīs[,] and Guptīs" (Ibid., 31).

[217] Daftary, 445.

[218] It held "...the twenty-sixth place on the traditional lists of *pīrs*..." (Ibid.).

[219] Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities*, 43. "[It] was in due course translated into Sindhī and Gujarātī and transcribed in Khojkī for the benefit of the Nizārī Khojās" (Daftary, 446). According to Hollister, "[t]his [book] is

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tradition, the last itinerant vernacular bard dispatched to Sind was Pīr Dādū (d. 1593).[221] In his last will, the Āqā Khān III designated his grandson, Karīm, as Imām and Pīr[222] of the Shīʿah Imāmī Ismāʿīlī Muslims.[223]

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attributed to Imām ʿAbd al-Salām [Shāh]..." (Hollister, 383 and Daftary, 509). According to Daftary, "[t]his book...['contains'] the religious admonitions of Imām Mustanṣir bi'llāh II..." (Daftary, 445).

[220] Ibid., and see Hollister, 383. "[It] appears to have reached Sind around the middle of the...16th century" (Daftary, 445). It "...was most probably dispatched to the scattered communities, including India, to reinforce their allegiance to the Qāsim-Shāhī line" (Nanji, 65).

[221] Daftary, 447. He "...was sent in the second half of the...16th century to Sind for the purpose of preventing the reversion of the Nizārī Khojās to Hinduism or their conversion to Sunnism, the dominant religions of the contemporary Indo-Muslim society...[He] played an important role in reorganizing the Indian Nizārī community and in strengthening the ties of that community with the Imām and the central *daʿwah* headquarters in Anjudān" (Ibid.). "[T]he period of Imām Abū Dharr ʿAlī remains undetermined, and at best Ivanow is able to show that his successor[,] Imām Dhu'l-Faqār ʿAlī[,] was born in 1567 and died in 1634. This evidence indicates that Imām Abū Dharr ʿAli was alive towards the last quarter of the sixteenth century and thus ties in with the dates we have relating Pīr Dādū to his Imāmah" (Nanji, 88). "With the ending of the line of *pīrs*, the Imāms came to be represented locally in India by *wakīls* [/*vakīls*] and *bāwās*...One of the most important duties of the *wakīl* and other local representatives of the Imāms was the collection of the religious dues and their proper transference to the central treasury of the *daʿwah* in Persia, located at the Imām's place of residence" (Daftary, 447). "In the same area as the grave of Imām Nizār who died in 1722, we find graves of Indian Ismāʿīlīs with Khojkī inscriptions. Perhaps some of these were pilgrims who died during a visit or while on a mission with the Vakīls to deliver the tithes. The earliest inscription is dated 1722. In addition to the inscriptions we have evidence of the practice of letters sent by the Imāms to the community in India. One of the ways by which the Imāms throughout the Fāṭimid and Nizārī periods kept in touch with the widely scattered communities was by sending letters. Although the letters preserved in the case of the community in India do not go back beyond 1792, the practice suggests the continuation of an earlier tradition" (Nanji, 93-94)

[222] "At the end of the nineteenth century, the third Āqā Khān, Imām Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh[,] did an important reform by taking for himself the title of Pīr of the Khojās. Before, this function was exercised by a family member, usually the Imām's heir. While claiming to be the Pīr, the Āqā Khān tried to bring Ismāʿīlism closer to Ṣūfism, and also to put an end to the Ismāʿīlī Sayyid's claim to share the Imāmate's charisma" (Boivin, "Gināns and the Management," 32).

[223] "Extrait du Testament de l'Aga Khan, 1955: 'I SULTAN SIR MAHOMED SHAH AGA KHAN, G.C.I.E., G.C.S.I. born on the Second day of November One thousand eight hundred and seventy seven at temporarily residing at the Hotel Ritz London HEREBY REVOKE all Wills and other testamentary dispositions heretofore made by me AND DECLARE this to BE MY LAST WILL which I make this Twenty fifth day of May One thousand nine hundred and fifty five.' 'Ever since the time of my ancestor Ali, the first Imam,' the solicitor read on, 'that is to say over a period of thirteen hundred years, it has always been the tradition of our family that each Imam chooses his successor at his absolute and unfettered discretion from amongst any of his descendants whether they be sons or remoter male issue.' '[A]nd in these circumstances and in view of the fundamentally altered conditions in the world in very recent years due to the great changes which have taken place including the discoveries of atomic science I am convinced that it is in the best interests of the Shia Moslem Ismailian Community that I should be succeeded by a young man who has been brought up and developed during recent years and in the midst of the new age and who brings a new outlook on life to his office as Imam.' 'For these reasons and although he is not now one of my heirs, I APPOINT my grandson KARIM, the son of my son ALY SALOMONE KHAN to succeed to the title of AGA KHAN and to be the Imam and Pir of all my Shia Ismailian followers, and should my said grandson KARIM predecease me then I APPOINT his brother AMYN MAHOMED, the second son of my son ALY SALOMONE KHAN as my successor to the Imamate. I DESIRE that my successor shall during the first seven years of his Imamate be guided on question of general Imamate policy by my said wife YVETTE called YVE BLANCHE LABROUSSE, the Begum Aga Khan, who has been familiar for many years with the problems facing my followers and in whose wise judgement I place the greatest confidence...'" (Idem, *La rénovation du Shiʿisme Ismaélien*, 427-428).

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CHAPTER TWO

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SCRIPTURE: 'ALĪ'S JOURNEY IN THE FOUR *YUGAS*

Words of learning, wisdom, scripture,
have no readers anymore.
Books and scrolls
are stacked away,
their content lost
from memory....

-Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn's *ginān*, *Pāḷa fāṭine nira ulaṭayā*[1]

SCRIPTURE AND SACREDNESS: THE *QUR'ĀN*

> What is ultimately significant about scripture as a concept and a reality is its role in expressing, focusing, and symbolizing the faith of religious persons and their communities around the globe, both for the faithful themselves and for the outsider who seeks a glimpse into another world of faith and discourse.[2]

In the Islāmic tradition, the *Qur'ān* is considered a sacred repository of Allāh's "speech"[3] conveyed by the Archangel Jibrā'īl to the Prophet Muḥammad over the course of twenty-three years (610-632 inclusive). Those who believed in the revelations compiled them, and from this compilation, speech assumed scriptural form; hence, the definition of scripture being "a writing, something written."[4] The religious community then began to revolve around that very scripture. Aside from the Prophet Muḥammad being a charismatic leader, one can say that scripture was responsible for forming the religious community.[5] Now that the

[1] Adapted from translation in Aziz Esmail, *A Scent of Sandalwood: Indo-Ismaili Religious Lyrics (Ginans)*, vol. 1, Selected and trans. with an Introduction, Interpretative Essay and Notes by Aziz Esmail (Richmond: Curzon Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2002), 141 and 222.
[2] William A. Graham, s.v. Scripture, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 12: Rnying Ma Pa – Soul, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 8204.
[3] Ibid., 8203.
[4] Ibid., 8196.
[5] See George L. Scheper, s.v. Charisma, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 3: Cabasilas, Nicholas – Cyrus II, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 1543-1553.

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community (*ummah*) had taken shape, it was the community that made scripture important; after all, it was viewed by the community as such.[6]

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It has been argued that the span of time gives even more credibility to that scripture versus a more recent scripture.[7] However, there is a problem in this understanding. If this were the case, then how does the *Qur'ān* justify its late revelation; after all, it was revealed much later than the *Torah* and *Gospel*. The *Qur'ān* (chapter (*sūrah*) 5, verses (*āyāt*) 44-48) states:

> We have revealed the *Torah*, in which there is guidance and light.
> By it the prophets who submitted to God judged the Jews,
> and so did the rabbis and the divines, according to God's Book
> which had been committed to their keeping and to which
> they themselves were witnesses...We sent forth Jesus
> son of Mary, confirming the *Torah* already revealed,
> and gave him the *Gospel*, in which there is guidance and light,
> corroborating what was revealed before it in the *Torah*:
> a guide and an admonition to the righteous. Therefore let
> those who follow the *Gospel* judge according to what
> God has revealed therein. Evil-doers are those
> that do not judge according to God's revelations.
> And to you [Muḥammad] We have revealed the Book with
> the truth. It confirms the Scriptures which
> came before it and stands as a guardian over them.
> Therefore give judgement among men according
> to God's revelations, and do not yield to their
> whims or swerve from the truth made known to you.[8]

These verses indicate that although the *Qur'ān* confirmed the earlier scriptures, it was to serve as a guardian over them. Now let us be critical in our approach here. When the verses were compiled in the latter part of the 7th century, the *Qur'ān* underwent a process of redaction. According to the Shī'ah, verses were omitted from the final *Qur'ānic* corpus (e.g., the

[6] Graham, 8195.
[7] Ibid., 8202.
[8] Chapter (*sūrah*) 5, verses (*āyāt*) 44-48 (*The Koran*, trans. N.J. Dawood (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 84-85).

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succession to the Prophet Muḥammad).[9] Does this mean that the *Qur'ān* has no value for the Shī'ah? Without question, in their eyes it is a very important holy book.[10]

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SCRIPTURE AND SACREDNESS: *GINĀNS*[11]

> In the *gināns* which Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn has composed[,]...he has conveyed and explained the gist of the *Qur'ān* in the language of Hindustān.[12]

The *gināns* are an intrinsic component in the lives of the Ismā'īlīs.[13] In the United States, for example, the *gināns* (*granths*:[14] "longer compositions"[15] / *gināns*: "shorter ones")[16] are recited daily – morning and evening – in the *jamā'at-khānas* by both the old and young.[17] In this manner, the tradition continues to live on.[18] The *rāgas* ("melodies") have undergone change as reflected in variant recitations of "one and the same" *ginān*.[19] Ali S. Asani notes:

> In more recent times, certain expressions in the *gināns* have also been altered so that they are more in consonance with changes in the community's religious identity. Thus, as the community identifies itself more closely with the greater Islāmic world, vocabulary items of Indian and Sanskritic origin perceived to be of 'Hinduistic' origin have gradually been replaced by Perso-

[9] According to the Shī'ah, the Prophet Muḥammad after his Farewell Pilgrimage in 632 made a 'stop' at a place called Ghadīr Khumm (located "between Mecca and Medina") where he proclaimed 'Alī as his successor: "*...man kuntu mawlāhu fa-'Alī mawlāhu* (He of whom I am the master, of him 'Alī is also the master)..." (Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 39).

[10] Abdullah Saeed, s.v. Qur'ān: Tradition of Scholarship and Interpretation, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 11: Pius IX – Rivers, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 7561.

[11] "The term *ginān* is derived from the Sanskrit word for 'knowledge,' in the sense of esoteric truth or wisdom; hence the *gināns* may perhaps be best understood as hymns of esoteric wisdom" (Ali S. Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim: The Articulation of Ismaili Khoja Identity in South Asia," in *A Modern History of the Ismailis: Continuity and Change in a Muslim Community*, ed. Farhad Daftary (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011), 99).

[12] *Fırman/Farmān* of the Āqā Khān III, cited in Ali S. Asani, "The Ismaili Gināns as Devotional Literature," in *Devotional Literature in South Asia: Current Research, 1985-1988*, ed. R.S. McGregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 107. *Fırmans/Farmāns* ("written directives") (Daftary, 487).

[13] Ali S. Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment: The Ismaili Devotional Literature of South Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2002), 25.

[14] Idem, *The Harvard Collection of Ismaili Literature in Indic Languages: A Descriptive Catalog and Finding Aid* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1992), 8.

[15] Azim Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1978), 19.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment*, 25, 27, and 41.

[18] See Sharmina Mawani, "*Aapnun Aap Pichano*: The Ginanic Tradition of the Nizari Ismaili Muslims of Gujarati Ancestry," in *Gujaratis in the West: Evolving Identities in Contemporary Society*, eds. Anjoom A. Mukadam and Sharmina Mawani (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 36-37.

[19] Nanji, 18.

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Arabic ones that are considered to be more compatible with an 'Islāmic' character.[20]

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Since the *gināns* are polyglottic[21] in form and the congregation is composed of members from different parts of the world (e.g., Indian subcontinent, Central Asia),[22] transliterations are provided (SEE FIGURES 3 AND 4).[23] In the religious schools, teachers who are well versed in the *gināns* aid students with proper recitation.[24] The *gināns* are then committed to memory when recited with the congregation. This method has been important for the preservation of the *gināns*.[25] Aside from the *rāgas*, the meanings of the *gināns* are essential.[26] In order to help understand what is embedded within the sacred words, translations are also provided. The efficacy of reciting the *gināns* is such that "[e]ven those who may not fully understand the meanings and significance of the words they sing may experience an emotion difficult to describe but which sometimes physically manifests itself through moist eyes or tears."[27] In the same vein, "[t]he *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, a medieval Hindu devotional text, says that true devotion is always accompanied by shivering, the hair standing on end, tears, and sighs of passion."[28]

[20] Citied in Dominique-Sila Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities: Ramdev Pir and the Ismailis in Rajasthan* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2003), 55. "In recent editions of *ginān* texts published by community institutions, for example, the word 'Hari' is replaced by "Alī,' and so on" (Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment*, 31).
[21] See Asani, *Harvard Collection*, 4.
[22] See Daftary, 504.
[23] See Mawani, 29 and see Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment*, 44.
[24] See Mawani, 32.
[25] See Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment*, 27.
[26] Āqā Khān IV's *firman/farmān* in Dacca on October 17, 1960: "I feel that unless we are able to continue this wonderful tradition[,]...we will lose some of our past which is most important to us and must be kept throughout our lives" (Citied in Tazim R. Kassam, *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: Hymns of the Satpanth Ismā'īlī Muslim Saint, Pīr Shams* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 1). Āqā Khān IV's *firman/farmān* in Karachi on December 16, 1964: "Many times I have recommended to my spiritual children that they should remember the *Gināns*, that they should understand the meaning of these *Gināns*[,] and that they should carry these meanings in their hearts. It is most important that my spiritual children from wherever they may come should, through the ages and from generation to generation, hold to this tradition which is so special, so unique[,] and so important to my *jamā'at*" (Citied in ibid., 1-2).
[27] Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment*, 41.
[28] David Kinsley and Vasudha Narayanan, s.v. Devotion, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 4: Dacian Riders – Esther, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 2317.

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SCRIPTURE AND SACREDNESS: HINDUISM[29]

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Hinduism has a rich religious tradition.[30] Some of its sacred texts include the *Vedas* (c. 1500 BCE),[31] the *Brāhmaṇas* (c. 900 BCE),[32] the *Upaniṣads* (c. 600 to 500 BCE),[33] the epics, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* (c. in the period of 200 BCE and 200 CE),[34] and the *Purāṇas* (in the beginning of the 1st millennium CE).[35] As a guide that was primarily uttered, the *Brāhmaṇas*[36] served as sources for the Brahmins (priests) who used them to conduct the ritual sacrifice.[37] During this period, sacrifice played an important role.[38] A shift took place with the coming of the *Upaniṣads* in which *Brahman* ("the Whole") became the focal point.[39] It follows then that "[s]uch texts do have 'scriptural' qualities, like the veneration they inspire and the authority they command, and thus might be treated as 'scripture' in certain contexts."[40]

[29] In "...Hinduism, there is no equivalent Hindu term [for the sacred]" (Ramdas Lamb, "Sacred," in *Studying Hinduism: Key Concepts and Methods*, eds. Sushil Mittal and Gene Thursby (New York: Routledge, 2008), 339).
[30] "Hinduism is without founder or prophets. It has no ecclesiastical or institutional structures" (John E. Vollmer, s.v. Clothing: Clothing and Religion in the East, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 3: Cabasilas, Nicholas – Cyrus II, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 1829).
[31] W. Randolph Kloetzli and Laurie Louise Patton, s.v. Cosmology: Hindu Cosmology, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 3: Cabasilas, Nicholas – Cyrus II, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 2014.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., 2015.
[34] Ibid., 2016. Jan Gonda provides an alternate dating for the *Mahābhārata*: c. 300 BCE-300 CE (Jan Gonda, s.v. Indian Religions: An Overview, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 7: Iconography – Justin Martyr, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 4428).
[35] Kloetzli and Patton, 2017.
[36] "Interpretation of the Vedic hymns was initiated in the Brāhmaṇas..." (Karen Pechilis, s.v. Soul: Indian Concepts, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 12: Rnying Ma Pa – Soul, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 8546).
[37] See Kloetzli and Patton, 2014. "The *Brāhmaṇas* represent an extensive body of literature that owes its existence to ritualistic speculation on the texts of the Vedic *Saṃhitās*. The priestly tradition that had created and preserved the early *Vedas* also expanded Vedic literature through explanations and commentaries" (Rick Franklin Talbott, *Sacred Sacrifice: Ritual Paradigms in Vedic Religion and Early Christianity* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1995), 11).
[38] Kloetzli and Patton, 2014. "The sacrifice and not the gods...[was] considered the source of time, space, and all things that make up the universe" (Ibid.).
[39] Ibid., 2015. "[These] *Upaniṣads*...were composed in prose (Ibid.).
[40] See Graham, 8195.

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SUB-CONCLUSION

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What can be said from our study is that scripture is what it is to those who conceive it as such. For a given community, scripture becomes communal property. However, outside of the community, it represents something different.[41]

'ALĪ AS RĀMA

> Perhaps one of the reasons why Rāma has not received the attention He would appear to deserve is that little attempt has been made to view His development as an integral character. Many of the studies relating to Rāma have not been analyses of Rāma as such but rather analyses of the original *Rāmāyaṇa* or of *Rāmāyaṇas* deriving from it, especially that of Tulsīdās in Hindī.[42]

It is not uncommon that scripture can take on a different light depending on the time period. This is the case with Rāma's "epic tale."[43] Rāma in the Indian tradition has been seen as a model of virtue, i.e., someone who can be emulated. Aside from his role as a son, brother, and husband, there is as we will come to see a divine aspect of Rāma.[44] For Tulsīdās, author of the *Rāmcaritmānas*, and the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* whose authorship has not reached consensus in the scholarly circle,[45] Rāma is Absolute.[46] The Ismā'īlīs also hold this; however, for them, "Rāma and Raḥmān [viz. 'Alī] are [both] one and the same."[47] 'Alī, according to the

[41] Ibid.
[42] Frank Whaling, *The Rise of the Religious Significance of Rāma* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), 2.
[43] Vālmīki, *The Ramayana*, trans. Ramesh Menon (New York: North Point Press, 2003), ix.
[44] See J.L. Brockington, *Righteous Rāma: The Evolution of an Epic* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984), 160.
[45] "It was Śiva who gave out this holy and esoteric text, which is called *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* (spiritual version of *Rāmāyaṇa*), the study of which bestows prosperity, long life and health" (*Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa: The Spiritual Version of the Rama Saga: Original Sanskrit with English Translation*, trans. Swami Tapasyananda (Mylapore, Chennai: Sri Ramakrishna Math, n.d.), 367).
[46] "While Vālmīki's great epic is mainly a Rāma Saga in respect of its direct meaning, *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* is a direct elaboration of its spiritual implications. While in the former[,] Rāma is a great hero, no doubt an incarnation of Viṣṇu, in the latter[,] he is a Deity–Mahāviṣṇu, in a thinly assumed mask of a man, held before all for worship" (*Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, iv-v). See "...Rāma...is the Supreme Being Hari..." (Ibid., vi).
[47] See transliteration and other translations of "*Saaheb Ji Tu(n) More Man Bhaave* by Pir Sayyed Muhammed Shah," Heritage Society, accessed March 26, 2014, http://www.ismaili.net/ginans/g79saa.html.

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Ismā'īlīs, has appeared in many forms (*avatāras*).[48] In his many incarnations, 'Alī is not distinct from Viṣṇu, but is himself Viṣṇu.[49] This is an important concept, as unlike Christianity's belief in the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Ismā'īlī belief is in the singularity of 'Alī, i.e., he is "one and the same." "[The] universal status of 'Alī as Imām is praised in the following very popular short *ginān*...attributed to Pīr Shams:

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hak tuṅ pāk tuṅ bādaśāh, maher-bān bi ali tuṅhi tuṅ.
rab tuṅ rahemān tuṅ, ali aval ākhar kāji tuṅhi tuṅ.
teṅ upāyā teṅ nıpāyā, sirajaṇ-hār bi tuṅhi tuṅ.
jal thal mul maṅḍaṇ-hār nāṅ, ali hukam terā bi tuṅhi tuṅ.
teri dosatie boliyā pir śamas, meṅ baṅdā terā ali tuṅhi tuṅ.

You are the truth, the pure one, and the King. You are beneficent also, o 'Alī, just you.
You are the Lord, you are the merciful one, o 'Alī, the first and the last, the judge, just you.
You have created, and you have sustained. You are indeed the creator, just you.
You are the disposer of the basis of the waters and the earth. O 'Alī, the authority is indeed yours, just yours.
In love for you Pīr Shams says: 'I am your slave, o 'Alī, just yours.'"[50]

THE ISMĀ'ĪLĪ TRADITION IN THE SUBCONTINENT

Eji tamāro Sāmi tam māṅhe emaj beṭho ji
Jiuṅ hae phuluṅ māṅhe vās...

O Brother: Your Lord is in you,
just as the fragrance is in a flower.[51]

The Ismā'īlī faith is an esoteric (*bāṭin*) faith.[52] "The pious believer" (*mu'min*) is addressed as *munivara* ("*muni*, an ascetic in the Buddhist, Jain and[,] Hindu traditions") and *rikhisar* ("*rikh*, *rikhi*, from the Sanskrit, *ṛṣi* referring to the ancient 'seers' of India"),[53] and the

[48] See Gulshan Khakee, "*The Dasa Avatāra of the Satpanthi Ismailis and the Imam Shahis of Indo-Pakistan*" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1972).
[49] See ibid., 3.
[50] Christopher Shackle and Zawahir Moir, *Ismaili Hymns from South Asia: An Introduction to the Ginans* (London: The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1992), 157.
[51] "Holy Ginan No. 10: Sayyada Imambegum's *Hardam Karo Abhiyaas*," SalmanSpiritual.Com, accessed March 24, 2014, http://salmanspiritual.com/Ramadan_ginans/Ginan_10.html.
[52] See Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 96. "As a result, the Ismā'īlīs have been called the *bāṭiniyyah*, 'the followers of the esoteric, the inner'" (Ibid.).
[53] See Khan, 47.

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Imāms and *pīrs* (*murshids*)[54] are considered to be their *satgurus* ("true guides").[55] A number of

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systems of thought (e.g., "Bhakti, Sant, Ṣūfī, Vaiṣṇavite[,] and yogic") were incorporated by the "*pīrs* and *sayyids*" in their *gināns*.[56] They "...referred to their teachings as *satpanth*...."[57] Thus, the Satpanthīs were adherents of the Ismā'īlī religion.[58]

[54] See Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 101. "As Shackle and Moir have it, '[t]hese Pīrs are depicted as personages with spiritual powers of an exaggerated nature, and overshadow the Imāms living in obscurity in the distant land of Irān.' Also 'it is indeed in many contexts not always possible fully to distinguish the Pīr from the Imām, who are often merged in such doublets as the 'Guide and Lord' ([S]kt.[:] *gur-nar*) or 'Lord and guide' (Persian[:] *pīr śāhā*)'" (Khan, 125).

[55]Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 100. "Hinduism is not alone in its insistence that the spiritual bond (*vidyāsambandha*) that exists between the spiritual preceptor (*guru*) and his disciple (*śiṣya*) is no less real than a blood relationship. Taking Socrates as the model preceptor, Kierkegaard maintained that the maieutic relationship between teacher and disciple was the highest possible relationship between man and man. Socrates, writes Kierkegaard, entered into the role of midwife, not because his thought lacked 'positive content,' but because he 'perceived that this relationship is the highest that one human being can sustain to another'" (Stuart W. Smithers, s.v. Spiritual Guide, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 13: South American Indian Religions – Transcendence and Immanence, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 8708). "The Ṣūfī mystic[,] Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī[,] spoke perhaps for many religious traditions besides his own when he noted that 'whoever travels without a guide needs two hundred years for a two day's journey'" (William K. Mahony, s.v. Spiritual Discipline, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 13: South American Indian Religions – Transcendence and Immanence, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 8699).

[56] See Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 96.

[57] Ibid. "[Nizārism] was mainly known by the Hindu appellation of *Sat Panth* (lit. the 'true path' or the 'true sect'), which may be regarded as an equivalent of the Arabic *dīn al-ḥaqq*, the true religion, as also *ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, the right path, used to designate Ismā'īlism in other contexts and emphasizing the priority of esoteric interpretation (*bāṭin*) over the exoteric (*ẓāhir*)" (Khan, 44-45). "Although the Ismā'īlī tradition of the subcontinent has largely remained unexplored to this day, various theories, justifications or explanations have been proposed for the emergence of the South Asian acculturated form of Nizārī Ismā'īlism; known under different names such as Sat Panth (True path), Gupta Panth (Secret path), Nizārī Dharma (Nizārī religion) etc., it has often been labeled 'syncretistic'" (Dominique-Sila Khan, "Diverting the Ganges: The Nizari Ismaili Model of Conversion in South Asia," in *Religious Conversion in India: Modes, Motivations, and Meanings*, eds. Rowena Robinson and Sathianathan Clarke (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 31).

[58] See Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 96. According to Shackle and Moir, "...the term Satpanthī or 'Followers of the True Path...' used in the *ginān*s to describe all Ismā'īlīs...came to be particularly reserved for the Imām-shāhīs," hence the name Imām-shāhī Satpanthīs (See Shackle and Moir, 8). See "...four Imām-shāhī sects known as Imām-shāhīs, Panchias, Sathias[,] and Athias..." (Khan, "Diverting the Ganges," 45). "Some of the earliest *ginān*s, such as the *Dasa Avatāra*, often hailed as a Satpanth classic, created an ostensible equivalence between the Vaiṣṇava Hindu concept of *avatāra* and the Ismā'īlī concept of *Imām*. In such *ginān*s, the *pīrs* represented themselves as guides who knew the whereabouts of the long-awaited tenth *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, meaning the Ismā'īlī Imām who they proclaimed was living in the west (Irān). As a result, these *ginān*s portray Satpanth as the completion or culmination of the Vaiṣṇavite Hindu tradition" (Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 99).

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AVATĀRAS AND THE *YUGAS*[59]

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"...India developed, like Greece, a theory of four ages [('or world epochs')][60] of declining goodness; where the Greeks named these ages after metals, the Indians called them after throws of the dice...."[61] "The *Kūrma Purāṇa* (1:27, 16-57; and 28:1-7)" describes "the four *yugas*" ("descending ages").[62] The first, *kṛtayuga*, was a time of spirituality and unity; in the second, *tretāyuga*, humanity moved away from spirituality to materiality, i.e., they began to seek the mundane ("pleasure and greed"); in the third, *dvāparayuga*, humanity as a result of their materialism is a witness and participant in "war, death, and suffering;" and finally in this age, *kaliyuga* ("the equivalent of snake-eyes in dice"),[63] "rampant hunger, fear, and inversion of social order" exist.[64] Kṛṣṇa, an incarnation of Viṣṇu, the *Bhagavadgītā* notes, came into the world to restore *dharma*.[65] Kṛṣṇa says:

> Son of Bhārata, whenever there is a decline in *dharma*,
> and the absence of *dharma* increases, I create Myself.
> I come into being from age to age with the purpose
> of fixing *dharma* – as a refuge for those who do good
> and as a doom for those who do wrong.[66]

In his *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrttana*,[67] the esteemed Bengali poet, Baḍu Caṇḍīdās, conveys this about Kṛṣṇa:

[59] "The struggle between God and evil forces can be seen as a cosmic struggle, as in the Hindu *Purāṇas*, in which demonic powers arise anew in each new age and Viṣṇu is incarnated anew in an *avatāra* to do battle and realign the cosmic order" (Theodore M. Ludwig, s.v. Monotheism, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 9: Mary – Ndembu Religion, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 6160). "In the search for effective means to convey the Ismā'īlī conception of the Imāmate to an Indian audience, the Mission adapted the well known Vaiṣṇava scheme of ten divine manifestations (*das avatāras*) so as to include Imām 'Alī as the tenth and last manifestation. These manifestations are distributed through the four ages (*yuga*)..." (See Shackle and Moir, 157).
[60] See R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, s.v. Eschatology: An Overview, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 4: Dacian Riders – Esther, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 2834.
[61] See Wendy Doniger, s.v. Indian Religions: Mythic Themes, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 7: Iconography – Justin Martyr, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 4440.
[62] Kloetzli and Patton, 2017-2018.
[63] Doniger, 4440.
[64] See Kloetzli and Patton, 2018-2019.
[65] See Manabu Waida, s.v. Incarnation, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 7: Iconography – Justin Martyr, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 4415.
[66] Kloetzli and Patton, 2017.
[67] "[C]omposed...sometime in the fourteenth or fifteenth century..." (Jesse Ross Knutson, *Into the Twilight of Sanskrit Court Poetry: The Sena Salon of Bengal and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 94).

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āhme harī nārāyaṇ mukunda murāri la
yugeṃ yuge abatār karī la...

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I am Hari, Nārāyaṇa, Mukunda, and Murāri
In each age I am incarnated....[68]

Pīr/Sayyid Imām Shāh as we will come to see was not the only one who incorporated the *avatāra* concept in his *ginān*, *Dasa Avatāra*. Centuries earlier, i.e., towards the end of the 12th century, the eminent poet, Jayadeva, too made use of the *avatāra* concept in his *Gītagovinda: Love Songs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa*; however, for him, Kṛṣṇa is paramount.[69] Jayadeva delineates the *avatāras* as follows:

IN THE DELUGE of dissolution, undaunted you behaved
Like a sailing ship that the *Veda* would be saved–
Késhava-Krishna incarnate as the Fish!
Hosanna to the Lord of the World, Hari-Krishna!

The earth was uplifted on your back, a shell
Circle-scarred and venerated well–
Késhava-Krishna incarnate as the Tortoise!
Hosanna to the Lord of the World, Hari-Krishna!

Like the darkness of a crescent moon was the world
Resting on your tusk, pointed and up-curled–
Késhava-Krishna incarnate as the Boar!
Hosanna to the Lord of the World, Hari-Krishna!

As though his body were but a bee's, Hiránya-káshipu
was impaled
By a wondrous finger of your lotus-hand, a finger
sharply nailed–
Késhava-Krishna incarnate as the Lion-Man!
Hosanna to the Lord of the World, Hari-Krishna!

Staggering dwarf, you bamboozled Bali with your stride
And with water from your toes we were purified–
Késhava-Krishna incarnate as the Dwarf!
Hosanna to the Lord of the World, Hari-Krishna!

With warrior blood you cleansed this world of sin,
Bringing renewed peace where misery had been–
Késhava-Krishna incarnate as the Wielder of the Axe!
Hosanna to the Lord of the World, Hari-Krishna!

In battle, you made offerings of crowning perfection:

[68] Ibid., 93, 111, and 190.
[69] Jayadeva, *Gītagovinda: Love Songs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa*, trans. Lee Siegel (New York: New York University Press and the JJC Foundation, 2009), xxii and 4-11.

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One of Rávana's ten heads to please the lord of
each direction–
Késhava-Krishna incarnate as Rama!
Hosanna to the Lord of the World, Hari-Krishna!

Murky is the mantle on your pale body, dusky as a cloud,
Dark as the Yámuna, fearfully following as you plowed–
Késhava-Krishna incarnate as the Plowman!
Hosanna to the Lord of the World, Hari-Krishna!

Deeming the slaughter of animals – oh! oh! – a cruel vice,
You censured Vedic texts for prescribing sacrifice–
Késhava-Krishna, incarnate as the compassionate Buddha!
Hosanna to the Lord of the World, Hari-Krishna!

To vanquish the invading barbarous horde,
You will wield a comet, your dreadful deadly sword–
Késhava-Krishna incarnate as Kalki!
Hosanna to the Lord of the World, Hari-Krishna!

Listen to Jaya-deva's glorious song, and you will be favored
With prosperity and joy in this life to be savored–
Késhava-Krishna in your ten incarnations!
Hosanna to the Lord of the World, Hari-Krishna!

Preserving the *Veda*, supporting the world,
lifting the globe,
eviscerating the demon Hiránya-káshipu,
bilking Bali, exterminating the warriors,
Conquering Rávana, wielding a plow, showing compassion,
and slaughtering the barbarians:
Homage to you, Krishna, in all your incarnations![70]

'ALĪ'S JOURNEY IN THE *KṚTAYUGA*: "THE *ṚGVEDA* WAS THE BASIS OF TRUE AUTHORITY"[71]

> The [i]ntroduction to the *Dasa Avatāra* (K edition) says that in the beginning there was 'you, Nārāyaṇa, self-conscious, free from all qualifications and conditions; all knowing and good; void of all darkness, ignorance, error[,] and imperfections.' Then he (Nārāyaṇa) created countless *crores*[72] of beings (*jīvas*); then he concentrated for a long long time, and then created four *kalpas*,[73] with their sixteen *yugas*.[74]

[70] Ibid., 6-11.
[71] Khakee, 20 and 23. "Ground" instead of "basis" is noted (Ibid., 21).
[72] "*[C]rore* (= one hundred *lākhs*, or ten million)..." (Shackle and Moir, 218).
[73] *Kalpa* = "...aeon, period of cosmic time..." (Ibid.).
[74] Khakee, 17.

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'Alī in his first journey appeared as Matsya (Fish).[75] His father and mother were Piremarukha and Saṃkhavatī, and accompanying him were his consort (*śakti*), Chaṃdhakadevī, and his *guru*, Manadhāta (Mandhata).[76] He slew Brahmā's son, Saṃkho/a[77] ("also called Saṃkhasara, or the demon Saṃkho"), and recovered for Brahmā the four *Vedas* from the demon's belly.[78] 'Alī in his second journey appeared as Kūrma (Tortoise).[79] His father and mother were Trikhata (Trikuta?) and Kamalavatī, and accompanying him were his consort (*śakti*), Ajia devī, and his *guru*, Ekarakhāja.[80] He slew the demon, Madhukīṭaka, at Bhesāsara (battlefield: *kṣetre*).[81] Many souls were freed.[82] 'Alī in his third journey appeared as Varāha (Boar).[83] He was born (place of birth?: *savasakhāna*)[84] in the city of Bāgapura.[85] His father and mother were Doelapura and Padamāṃvatī, and accompanying him were his consort (*śakti*), Bahukādevī, and his *guru*, Sejanaṃdha.[86] He slew the demon, Mora, at Māna Sarovara (lake Māna) (*kṣetre*).[87] 'Alī in his fourth journey appeared as Narasiṃha (Man-Lion).[88] He was born in Kashmīr.[89] His father and mother were Haritaka and Chaṃdhavatī, and accompanying him were his consort (*śakti*), Samaedevī, and his *guru*, Amarateja.[90] He slew the demon, King

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[75] Ibid., 17-20. "In the first *yuga* (era) of the fourth *kalpa* he assumed the form of a fish" (Ibid., 17).
[76] Ibid., 20.
[77] Renderings of the demon's name (Saṃkho/Saṃkha) (Ibid., 17-20).
[78] See ibid. "[He] liberated the devotee[,] Rukhamugata[,] with one and a quarter *crore* of beings" (Ibid., 20). 'Alī persisted as Matsya for a long time: "...A period of four *lākhs* and thirty-two thousand years..." (Ibid.). "*[L]ākh*...[=] one hundred thousand..." (Shackle and Moir, 240).
[79] Khakee, 20.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] "[He]...liberated the devotee[,] Amarīkha[,] with one and a quarter *crores* of souls" (Ibid.). 'Alī persisted as Kūrma for a long time: "[F]our *lākhs* and thirty-two thousand years..." (Ibid.).
[83] Ibid., 21.
[84] Additional rendering of place of birth (*savasakhāna*) (Ibid., 23).
[85] Ibid., 21.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid. "He...liberated the devotee[,] Dhru[,] with one and a quarter *crores* of beings" (Ibid.). 'Alī persisted as Varāha for a long time: "[F]our *lākhs* and thirty-two thousand years..." (Ibid.).
[88] Ibid., 21-22.
[89] Ibid., 23.
[90] Ibid., 22-23.

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Haranakaṃsa (Hiraṇyakaśipu),[91] at the city of Musatana (Multān?) (*kṣetre*).[92] The *kṛtayuga* continued for a long period.[93]

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> [F]ifteen *crores* of beings had been appointed in all [during this *yuga*]; of these[,] five *crores* were sincere and loved Hari, so they were liberated; five *crores* of them did not have complete faith in Hari, so they went into the cycle of reincarnation; and the rest of the five *crores* were thrown into hell ([Persian:] *duzakh*).[94]

'ALĪ'S JOURNEY IN THE *TRETĀYUGA*: 'THE *YAJURVEDA* WAS THE BASIS OF TRUE AUTHORITY'[95]

'Alī in his fifth journey appeared as Vāmana (Dwarf).[96] He was born in Koelāpura.[97] His father and mother were Kesavaratha and Lināvatī, and accompanying him were his consort (*śakti*), Koelādevī, and his *guru*, Bahulocana.[98] He slew the demon, King Bala (Bali), at Vaṇathāri Junagadha (*kṣetre*).[99] 'Alī in his sixth journey appeared as Faṇasīrāma (Paraśurāma)[100] ("the bearer of the bow and the arrow").[101] He was born in the city of Maṃjapura.[102] His father and mother were Javalagana (Jamadagni) and Raṇakāvatī, and accompanying him were his consort (*śakti*), Tuluja Bhavanī ("Bhavanī = Kalī"), and his *guru*, Akasabuṃbha.[103] He slew the demon, Sheshatra-arajuna,[104] at Koelāpur (*kṣetre*).[105] 'Alī in his

[91] Additional rendering of the demon's name (Haranakasa) (Ibid., 21).
[92] Ibid., 21-23. "[He] liberated the devotee[,] Paelāja [Prahlād], with one and a quarter *crores* of beings, who had been worshipping according to the Satpanth" (Ibid., 21-22). 'Alī persisted as Narasiṃha for a long time: "[F]our *lākhs* and thirty-two thousand years..." (Ibid., 23).
[93] "[S]eventeen *lākhs* and twenty-eight thousand years..." (Ibid.).
[94] Ibid., 22.
[95] Ibid., 24. "Ground" instead of "basis" is noted (Ibid., 28).
[96] Ibid., 23.
[97] Ibid., 24.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., 23-24. "[He] liberated the devotee[,] Kamaladhena, and then all the world recognised him" (Ibid., 24). 'Alī persisted as Vāmana for a long time: "[F]our *lākhs* and thirty-two thousand years..." (Ibid.).
[100] Additional rendering of "the bearer of the bow and the arrow" (Faṇasirāma) (Ibid.).
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid., 25.
[103] Ibid., 24-25. "The deva killed Kṣatriyas and made the world free from [them]..." (Ibid., 24).
[104] Additional rendering of the demon's name (Sheshatra-arajana) (Ibid.).
[105] Ibid., 24-25. "Then he liberated the devotee[,] Kamalāpati" (Ibid., 24). 'Alī persisted as Faṇasīrāma for a long time: "[F]our *lākhs* and thirty-two thousand years..." (Ibid., 25).

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seventh journey appeared as Rāma.[106] He was born in Ayodhyā.[107] His father, mother, and brother were Daśaratha, Kausalavaṃtī (Kausalyā), and Lakṣmaṇa, and accompanying him were his consort (*śakti*), Sītā, and his *guru*, Lakhamaṇa ("actually his brother, Lakṣmaṇa").[108] He slew Daśaśiras ('Ten-headed, or Rāvaṇa')[109] at Laṅkāpuri (*kṣetre*).[110]

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'ALĪ'S JOURNEY IN THE *DVĀPARAYUGA*: "THE *SĀMAVEDA* WAS THE BASIS OF TRUE AUTHORITY"[111]

'Alī in his eighth journey appeared as Kṛṣṇa.[112] He was born in Gokalapur.[113] His father and mother were Vasudeva and Devakī, and accompanying him were his consort (*śakti*), Queen Rukmiṇī, and his *guru*, Vidura.[114] He helped the Pāṇḍavas defeat Duryodhana at Kurukṣetra.[115] Kṛṣṇa slew his uncle, the demon, Kaṃsa, at Mathurā (*kṣetre*).[116] 'Alī in his ninth journey appeared as Buddha.[117] He was versed in "Fārsī" (Persian).[118] He was born in Ujenapura.[119] His father and mother were Vinavicharāja and Karaṇāvatī, and accompanying him were his

[106] Ibid., 26.
[107] Ibid., 28.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., 26.
[110] See ibid., 25-28. "[He] liberated the devotee[, King] Hariścandra...[King] Hariścandra reached heaven by following the Satpanth in secrecy" (Ibid., 28). 'Alī persisted as Rāma for a long time: "[F]our *lākhs* and thirty-two thousand years..." (Ibid.). The *tretāyuga* continued for a long period, i.e., for "...twelve *lākhs* and ninety-six thousand years..." (Ibid.). During this *yuga*, "...the *guru*[,] Vijesaṭhaṛa Viāsa [Vyasa?,] appointed twenty-one *crores* of beings. Out of these, seven *crores* were true and were liberated. Seven more *crores* were partly true, so they went into the cycle of reincarnation. And seven *crores* went to hell. But the seven *crores* of true ones together with [King] Hariścandra had followed the Satpanth" (Ibid., 27-28 and for additional renderings of Vyasa, see ibid., 23, 25, and 27).
[111] Ibid., 30.
[112] Ibid., 28.
[113] Ibid., 30.
[114] Ibid., 28 and 30.
[115] Ibid., 29.
[116] Ibid., 30. 'Alī persisted as Kṛṣṇa for a long time: "[F]our *lākhs* and thirty-two thousand years..." (Ibid.).
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid., 34.

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consort (*śakti*), Hirṣādevī, and his *guru*, Haṃsarāja.[120] He slew the demon Duryodhana at Kulakhetra (*kṣetre*).[121]

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'ALĪ'S JOURNEY IN THIS *KALIYUGA*: "THE *ATHARVAVEDA* IS NOW THE TRUTH"[122]

eji das māṅhe āp hakikat beṭho...

In the tenth, He Himself is seated as the Truth....[123]

eji pāchame āyā śāhā paratak pāyā,
bhulā re gāphal jeṇe janam harāyā.

sarevo siri salām śāhā maedi dasamuṅ avatār ali;
alakh purakh śāhā tuṅ jive jo dātār, śāhā purakh tun saraṇie satār;
sırevo sari esalām śāhā maedi dasamuṅ avatār ali.

eji pāchame pātr nakalaṅki nārāyaṇ.
āpe rupe śāhā tuṅ apar pariāṇ;
tam ne sırevuṅ śāhā avar na jāṇuṅ.

eji sukā siṅcāve śāhā hariā phalāve, hae bhi yuṅkar ahonıs deve;
dio re dio sāheb detā kuṅ deve.

eji mach korab vārā bhaṇāyā; *chede dāṇav nar-siṅ lakhāyā.*
eji vāemaṇ phaḍasirām rām rājā sohi;
sohi kıratā jug meṅ śāhā tretā meṅ sohi.

eji duāpar kān budh avatār,
sol sesatr gopiuṅ śāhā jiuṅ mathurā miṅjhār;
truṭho gatie khe śāhā dev murār.

eji aj kal vāre śāhā pāchame āyā, nar nārāyaṇ śāhā paratak pāyā;
bhulā re gāphal janam harāyā.

In the West the Lord has come and is made manifest.
How deluded are the heedless ones who have made no use of their lives!

Serve the lord Islām Shāh,[124] the Mahdī,[125] tenth manifestation and 'Alī.

[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid., 33-34. "[He] liberated the devotee[s-]Pāṇḍavas. (But the body of...Yudhiṣṭhira...had not gone completely yet, because in his life once he had spoken a lie)" (Ibid., 33). 'Alī persisted as Buddha for a long time: "[F]our *lākhs* and thirty-two thousand years..." (Ibid., 34). The *dvāparayuga* continued for a long period, i.e., for "...eight *lākhs* and sixty-four thousand years" (Ibid.). During this *yuga*, "[t]he *guru*[,]...[Vidura,] had appointed twenty-seven *crores* of beings; of these nine *crores* were truthful and were liberated; nine *crores* had less faith and went into the cycle of reincarnation; the remaining nine *crores*, who did not love the *guru*[,] Nārāyaṇa, went to hell. The Pāṇḍavas followed the Satpanth" (Ibid.).
[122] Ibid.
[123] See Pīr Shams' *Das avatār* (Shackle and Moir, 157-158).

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> O invisible Lord, You are generous to Your creatures. Great Lord, You veil the sins of those who take refuge with You. Serve the lord Islām Shāh, the Mahdī, tenth manifestation and ‘Alī.
>
> In the West as the vessel immaculate and divine, as Yourself in form, You are a being apart, o Lord. I serve you, Lord, and know no other.
>
> The Lord gives water to those who are withered, and makes those who flourish bear fruit. It is He who exists, and thus perpetually gives. Give, o give, for to those who give He gives.
>
> He was known as the Fish, the Tortoise[,] and the Boar. He destroyed demons and was known as the Man-Lion.
>
> It was he who was the Dwarf, Paraśurāma[,] and Rāma the [K]ing. It was He who was the Lord in the *Kṛta* age and in the *Tretā* too.
>
> In the *Dvāpara* age, He was manifest as Kṛṣṇa and Buddha. The Lord had sixteen thousand *gopīs* in Mathurā. The divine Lord was pleasing to the community.
>
> In these times, the Lord has come to the West and is made manifest. How deluded are the heedless ones who have made no use of their lives![126]

‘Alī in his tenth and final form has appeared as himself.[127] He is known as Nakalaṅki[128] (“the Immaculate”).[129] What follows are “...the signs...[that will precede] the coming of the Qā’im...[:]

> [T]he signs are all unnatural events, such as a cow having twins, the sea crossing the tide line, or bad events, such as all people speaking lies and calumny, brothers fighting among themselves[,] etc...Even the believers (*mu’mins*) will be corrupted...So with all those signs, the *Kali* era will be filled. Then the Qā’im will come openly. Then the auspicious signs will be seen, such as the she-elephant giving milk, the sea waters turning sweet[,] etc.; and when all these signs are fulfilled, then one should know that the Shāh has come.”[130]

[124] In Persian, *shāh* = “king” (Wheeler M. Thackston, *An Introduction to Persian*, Rev. 3rd ed. (Bethesda, Maryland: Ibex Publishers, Inc., 1993), 273).
[125] “[T]he salvific power of the name of ‘Alī, in whom the Imāmate was first vested, is a major theme of the *gināns.* ‘‘Alī’ in fact stands for all the Imāms, since his spirit lives on in all his successors until it becomes ultimately manifest (*avatār-*) in the final Resurrection (*kıyāmat*) as the Mahdī who brings final deliverance as the everlasting ‘Lord of the Resurrection’ (*kāem śāhā*)” (Shackle and Moir, 157).
[126] “[S]hort *Das avatār*...[*ginān*] attributed to Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn...” (Ibid., 158-159).
[127] See Khakee, 34.
[128] Ibid. Additional renderings of “the Immaculate” (Nakalanki/Nakalaṃki) (Ibid., 34 and 39).
[129] See Shackle and Moir, 157. “The *Dasamo Avatāra* text (Kx 6 and 7)...say[s] that Hari (an appellation of Viṣṇu) is the tenth Nakalaṅki incarnation...” (See Khakee, 44). “[T]he names ‘Qā’im’ and ‘Shāh’ which are solely used of the Imām, and not of the Prophet, are used synonymously in the *Dasamo Avatāra* text with the appellations of Viṣṇu such as ‘Hari,’ ‘Abhaṃga,’ ‘Pratipāl’[,] etc.” (Ibid.).
[130] Ibid., 36-37.

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'Alī has appeared to slay the demon, King Kālīgo[131]/Azāzīl, who resides in "Cīna mahā Cīna."[132]

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Cīna mahā Cīna is also the birthplace of the demon.[133] The battle is to take place not in Cīna mahā Cīna, but in Jampudipa (India).[134] The Shāh will ride his horse, *Duldul*,[135] and is to wield a sword with three sides.[136] The text goes on to say that the demon's wife and Queen, Surajā, and their son, Prince Kamalā, who became adherents of the Satpanth,[137] implore him not to battle with the Shāh.[138] He remains obstinate and determined.[139] The Queen not favoring his belligerent attitude strikes him; the demon is no more.[140] The battle is still had without the demon "...until the river Sarasvatī flows with blood."[141]

> Then follows a description of the *Qiyāmah* (Judgment), how the trumpet will be blown,[142] and how all the beings will be resurrected...[T]he untrue lazy Satpanthīs will be punished as will be those who worship stones and trees, those who go to the *tīrthas* [('places of pilgrimage'),][143] etc...[However,] the Shāh will protect the *dharmin* (religious ones) with an umbrella.[144]

[131] Ibid., 34. Additional renderings of the demon's name (Kaligo) (Ibid.), [K]aliṅgo and Kalingo (Shackle and Moir, 191), and Kāliṅgo (Ibid., 219).
[132] See Khakee, 34-39 passim. "In the 'big' *Dasa avatāra*, Chenāb has become China (*Cīna Mahā Cīna*), although also a fortified city in Cīna Mahā Cīna that is once called Chenāb" (See Alf Hiltebeitel, *Rethinking India's Oral and Classical Epics: Draupadī among Rajputs, Muslims, and Dalits* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 343).
[133] Khakee, 34.
[134] See ibid., 34-39 passim.
[135] "The Shāh is manifest in his luminosity as 'Alī...[The] Shāh mounts the riderless horse *Duldul*, the white mare of Muḥammad, who 'survived' Muḥammad, 'and according to Shī'ī tradition, was inherited by 'Alī' to be ridden in historical battles. Now *Duldul* waits to be remounted by the apocalyptic 'Alī,...who will also ride a white horse" (Hiltebeitel, 343). "The Shāh is described mounting his horse[,] *Duldul*. Then follow descriptions of the ornaments of the horse, and of the Shāh. All the souls who have been liberated in the previous eras come to join the Shāh and his army" (Khakee, 37-38).
[136] Ibid., 38. "An allusion to 'Alī's sword, Ḍhulfikār; may also allude to Śiva's *trīṣūla* (trident)" (Kassam, 168).
[137] Khakee, 34-35.
[138] Ibid., 38. "[They tell him] that it is not possible to fight with the Indestructible Hari" (Ibid.).
[139] Ibid., 39. "[He] says that he will go and kill Hari and bring his head to her" (Ibid.).
[140] Ibid. Queen Surajā "...takes a stick and hits the neck of the demon. The demon falls onto the floor dead" (Ibid.).
[141] See ibid., 38-39. "Then the head of the demon is thrown to Cīna mahā Cīna, and Cīna mahā Cīna is sunk into the sea. Now the demon has no progeny left" (Ibid., 39).
[142] "On that day the Trumpet shall be sounded and all who dwell in the heavens and on earth be seized with fear, except for those whom God will choose to spare. All shall come to Him in utter humility...Those that have done good shall be rewarded with what is better, and shall be secure from the terrors of that day. But those that have done evil shall be hurled headlong into the Fire. Shall you not be rewarded according only to your deeds" (*The Koran*, *sūrah* 27, *āyāt* 87 and 89-90)?
[143] Shackle and Moir, 227.
[144] Khakee, 39-40.

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As an admonition to the Hindus, Pīr Shams in his *Bhulā ma bhule bhamajore hīndu juo cho śuṅ marama (Garbī*[145] *18)* says:

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O Hindus! Stop going aimlessly in circles!
What meaning do you see in this?

O Hindus! What will you gain by stone-worship
except to accumulate *karma* [*karman*]?[146]

O Hindus! You adorn stones with garlands:
do not be foolish, do not go astray!

O Hindus! He who errs loses the essence (*sār*);
he will find a place nowhere.

O Hindus! Those who dwell on the three *Vedas*!
Know that their time is over.

O Hindus! Gone are the nine saviors (*avatāra*)
upon whom you meditate!

O Hindus! Gone is Brahmā of the *brahmins*!
He has become the Ḥusaynī *Imām*.

O Hindus! Gone are the [times of] cow-worship!
Now worship 'Alī's name (*nām*).

O Hindus! Gone are the sixty-eight pilgrimages (*tīrtha*)
[once] so full of Brahmā's feats.

O Hindus! On and on why wander in circles?
Drink in the pure Light (*nūr*)!

O Hindus! Why bow your heads before stone?
Know that the *avatāra* is Qāsim Shāh.

O Hindus! He who lives in Kahak city is the Sāheb–
he is the giver of boons!

[145] Kassam notes: "Briefly, the *Garbīs* consist of a sequence of twenty-eight folk songs ranging from eighteen to twenty-two verses each. The word *garbī* has several meanings. In Gujarātī, the *garbī* is a popular folk dance akin to another dance form called the *rāsa*, in which dancers move around in a circle singing and keeping rhythm by clapping their hands and feet. Originally, the word *garbī* referred to an earthen pot with holes on the sides which was used by Hindus as a receptacle for lamps celebrating their deity's luminous presence. Typically, devotees would sing and dance circling around the lamp pot to honor the deity of which it was the receptacle. Women often danced with the pots on their heads. The actual songs sung on such occasions were also called *garbīs*" (Kassam, 106).

[146] "[T]he word *karma*...[is] the nominative form of the Sanskrit *karman*..." (William K. Mahony, s.v. Karman: Hindu and Jain Concepts, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 8: Ka'bah – Marx, Karl, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 5094). "The term is based on the Sanskrit verbal root *kr*, meaning 'act, do, bring about,' the idea being that one makes something by doing something; one creates by acting. It may be of interest to note that some linguists see the Indo-European root of the word *karman* (namely, **kwer*, 'act') in the English word *ceremony*, which can mean either a combination of sacred acts performed according to prescribed norms or a system of proper behavior that keeps the world running smoothly" (Ibid.).

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O Hindus! Worshipping him, you will be freed–
today I have revealed the truth (*sāc*).

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O Hindus! Attaining Heaven (*vaikuṇṭha*),
you will reign in ceaseless bliss.

O Hindus! You will gain fifty damsels
if you accept the religion (*dharma*) of *Satpanth.*

O Hindus! Give up your sins in the gathering,
and all your deeds (*karma*) will dissolve.

O Hindus! Pīr Shams said this:
I am revealing to you the final message.

O Hindus! Do not be fools and go astray;
serve the Bow-Wielder [Viṣṇu]![147]

THE ISMĀ'ĪLĪ INTERPRETATION OF 'ALĪ'S JOURNEY AS RĀMA[148]

As noted, 'Alī in his seventh incarnation came as Rāma. Here we will focus on providing an interpretation of a stanza from a *gināṉ* ascribed to Pīr/Sayyid Fazil Shāh (d. c. 1659) that references King Rāvaṇa:

eji rājā rāvaṇ keri laṅkā nagari sone keri nagari,
rājā bhoj sarikhi nagari dhārā,
jire dhan re joban kero gırab na kije ahuṅkār na kije,
tā kuṅ jātā na lāge vār...

King Rāvaṇa's city of Laṅkā was a city of gold, like King Bhoja's city of Dhārā.
But do not be proud of your wealth and youth, do not be filled with selfish pride,
for it will not be long before you depart....[149]

[147] Kassam, 352-353.

[148] "Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa...were ruling, but the queen[,]...Kaikeyī[,]...asked the king to let her own son[,] Bharata[,] rule instead, and to send Rāma into the forest. Rāma is the creator of the fourteen worlds, yet when Rāma was leaving Ayodhyā...to go into the forest, and all the people of Ayodhyā went after him, asking him to return, he sent them all back, saying he must suffer for his own 'karmas.' So Rāma went to the forest and lived there for twelve years...[T]he demon[,] Rāvaṇa[,] planned to steal Sītā (Rāma's wife), and came to her in the form of a begging mendicant, and carried her away. Rāma called Hanumāt (the monkey god in Hindu mythology, Hanumān) to help him retrieve Sītā. So Hanumān hastened to Laṅkā (Ceylon), where Rāvaṇa was. Hanumān went and found Sītā, and with his tail, to which a piece of burning cloth was tied, he burnt Laṅkā. Then Rāma fought the demon[,] Rāvaṇa's army, and brought Sītā back" (See Khakee, 26-27).

[149] Shackle and Moir, 192-193. See "[t]he references in [the] verse...are to the sack of the mighty demon-king Rāvaṇa's kingdom of Laṅkā by Rāma, which is described in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and to the semi-legendary [K]ing Bhoja (d. [c.] 1082...) of Dhārā in Mālwā, who was proverbial for his royal fame and fortune" (Ibid.).

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The tale of Rāvaṇa for the Ismā'īlīs has moral value. It serves as a reminder that this world (*dunyā*) is an illusion (*māyā*) and that one should not be easily deceived by it. The soul is eternal.[150] The essence and purpose of life is to obtain the spiritual vision (*darśan/dīdār*) of the Imām and to attain liberation (*mokṣa*), i.e., for the drop (*ātman*) to become one with the ocean ('Alī).[151]

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CONCLUSION

Our research has demonstrated that the *pīrs* consciously merged Indian (e.g., *avatāra*) and Ismā'īlī (e.g., Mahdī: "Lord of the Resurrection") concepts to create a distinctive tradition (Satpanth) in the Indian milieu. In all of his ten incarnations, 'Alī is not distinct from Viṣṇu, but is himself Viṣṇu (one light). Furthermore, unlike the Hindu understanding that the tenth *avatāra* has yet to come, the Ismā'īlīs hold that this *avatāra* has already appeared as 'Alī.

TEXT: Khojkī Manuscript[152]

Transliteration[153]

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Gınān 84

(84) *Gınān Pir Śamsnuṅ*

[150] "When the soul finds the Way, life blooms like a flower. Mingled with adoration, it becomes fragrant as aloe or sandal. With love the swan swims on the lake" (Stanza of Sayyid Fatḥ 'Alī Shāh's *New Year Hymn*, ibid., 86-87). "[The *gināns*] urge...the faithful to follow the right path (*satpanth*) by adopting a righteous lifestyle, recognizing the transitory nature of the world[,]...and the evils of attachment to it" (See Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim," 100).

[151] See ibid., 100-101. "Darśan means 'seeing.' In the Hindu ritual tradition[,] it refers especially to religious seeing, or the visual perception of the sacred...They [i.e., Hindus] go to 'see' the image of the deity – be it Kṛṣṇa or Durgā, Śiva or Viṣṇu – present in the sanctum of the temple..." (Diana L. Eck, *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 3).

[152] Images of Khojkī and Gujarātī manuscripts from Pyarali Jiwa, "Creating a Database of Gināns and Related Materials," in *Gināns, Texts and Contexts: Essays on Ismaili Hymns from South Asia in Honour of Zawahir Moir*, Rev. ed., eds. Tazim R. Kassam and Françoise Mallison (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), n.p.). For Khojkī script, see Asani, *Harvard Collection*, 678-683 and Shackle and Moir, 34-54 passim.

[153] Author's transliteration. For other transliterations, see Jiwa, n.p. and "*Ab Teree Mahobat Laagee* by Peer Shamsh," Heritage Society, accessed April 5, 2015, http://www.ismaili.net/granths/040899/4.html.

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Eji ab teri mohobat lāgi,
dil mere mohobat lāgi;
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nenuṅse nen mılāvo – o mere sāheb. (1)

Eji kholo pardā sanamukh dekho,
haṅs haṅs mukh dıkhalāvo – o mere sāheb. (2)

Eji teri suratake pir śams pıyasā,
darasan dān dilāvo – o mere sāheb. (3)

Eji hamasuṅ ris na karie o piārā,
hamakuṅ saṅg calāvo – o mere sāheb. (4)

Eji juvāni divāni so kuch na nıbhegi,
jiuṅ nadiokā nir calāvo – o mere sāheb. (5)

Eji āśak terā tere sāth calegā,
dosti dil bıc lāvo – o mere sāheb. (6)

Eji chel chabilā e suno alabelā,
maya tuṅ man bic lāvo – o mere sāheb. (7)

Eji caṅcal cālā e joban matavālā,
mohabat manameṅ lāvo – o mere sāheb. (8)

Eji teri ramajakā piā meṅ huṅ divānā,
iśk akal bhulāvo – o mere sāheb. (9)

Eji mukhaḍā dekheā tab man hırakheā,
pir śams kaṅthi suṇāya – o mere sāheb. (10)

Translation[154]

Khojkī Manuscript

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Devotional Oration 84

(84) Devotional Oration of Pīr Shams

[154] Author's translation. For other translations, cf. Kassam, 205, Esmail, 139-140 and 222, and "*Ab Teree Mohobat Laagee* by Pir Shamsh," Heritage Society, accessed April 5, 2015, http://www.ismaili.net/ginans/c61ab.html.

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1 O now I am in love with you [i.e., the Imām]!
My heart is in love;
O my Master, let my eye meet with your eye [i.e., let our eyes meet in mystical union]!

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2 O open the veil [i.e., the veil of separation], so that we can see face to face!
O my Master, reveal your joyful face!

3 O Pīr Shams is yearning for your appearance!
O my Master, grant me the vision [i.e., mystical vision]!

4 O Beloved, O do not behave as if you are upset with me!
O my Master, resume the relationship with me!

5 O youth is silly; it will not last!
O my Master, as water of a river [i.e., move forward with the relationship]!

6 O your lover will accompany you!
O my Master, bring forth your friendship in the depths of my heart!

7 O Beautiful Admirer, O listen Beautiful [One]!
O my Master, you bring forth compassion in the depths of my heart!

8 O the fickle stride, O the trance-like youth![155]
O my Master, bring forth love in my heart!

9 O my Lover, I am crazy after your playfulness!
O my Master, love makes the intellect forgetful!

10 O then my heart was in rapture when I saw your face [i.e., mystical vision was realized]!
O my Master, Pīr Shams recited this recitation [i.e., *gınān*]!

List of Abbreviations[156]

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Devotional Oration 84

[155] "[T]rance-like ecstasy (*matavālā*)" (Tazim R. Kassam, "Syncretism on the Model of the Figure-ground: A Study of Pīr Shams' *Brahma Prakāśa*," in *Hermeneutical Paths to the Sacred Worlds of India: Essays in Honour of Robert W. Stevenson*, ed. Katherine K. Young (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1994), 233).
[156] List of abbreviations derived from Shackle and Moir, 212-213.

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Arabic (Ar)
Gujarātī (G)
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Hindī, Hindī/Urdū (H)
Lahnda (Laṇḍā), i.e., Siraiki (Sarāikī) (L)
Persian (Pers)
Sindhī/Kacchī (S)
Sanskrit, Sanskritic (Sk)

Provenance of Select Terms,[157] Alternate Renderings[158] and Comments[159]

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Devotional Oration 84

Title: *Gınān* (*gınān, ginān* : Sk: *jñāna-*); *Pir* (Pers); *Śams* (*śamas, samaś* : Ar: *śams*); *nuṅ* (G)

Stanza 1, Line 1: *Eji* (GH); *ab* (H); *teri* (H); *mohobat* (Ar: *muḥabbat*); *lāgi* (HL: *lag-, lāg-*)
Stanza 1, Line 2: *dil* (*dıl, dil*: Pers: *dil*); *mere* (H); *mılāvo* (H: *mılāv-*); *sāheb* (Ar: *śāḥib*)

Stanza 2, Line 1: *kholo* (GH: *khol-*); *sanamukh* (Sk: *saṅmukha-*); *dekho* (GH: *dekh-*)
Stanza 2, Line 2: *haṅs* (GH: *has-, haṅs-*); *mukh* (Sk: *mukha-*); *dıkhalāvo* (H: *dıkhalā-*)

Stanza 3, Line 1: *suratake* (Ar: *śūrat*); *pıyasā* (H: *piāso*)
Stanza 3, Line 1: *śams*: a single dot is inserted above the 'm' in the manuscript
Stanza 3, Line 2: *darasan* (Sk: *darśana-*); *dān* (Sk: *dāna-*)

Stanza 4, Line 1: *na* (GH); *karie* (GH: *kar-*); *piārā* (GH: *piāro*)
Stanza 4, Line 2: *calāvo*: read: *chalāvo*

Stanza 5, Line 1: *so* (H); *kuch* (H); *nıbhegi* (GL: *nibh-*)
Stanza 5, Line 1: *nıbhegi*: read: *nibhegi*
Stanza 5, Line 2: *nadiokā* (Sk: *nadī-*); *nir* (Sk: *nīra-*)
Stanza 5, Line 2: *calāvo*: read: *chalāvo*

Stanza 6, Line 1: *āśak* (Ar: *'āśiq*); *terā* (H); *sāth* (GH)
Stanza 6, Line 1: *calegā*: read: *chalegā*
Stanza 6, Line 2: *dosti* (Pers); *lāvo* (G: *lāv-*)

[157] Provenance of terms derived from ibid., 214-247 passim.
[158] Alternate renderings derived from ibid.
[159] For transliterations, cf. Jiwa, n.p. and "*Ab Teree Mahobat Laagee* by Peer Shamsh," Heritage Society, accessed April 5, 2015, http://www.ismaili.net/granths/040899/4.html.

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Stanza 6, Line 2: *bıc*: read: *bich*

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Stanza 7, Line 1: *e* (GH); *suno* (GS: *suṇ-, sun-*)
Stanza 7, Line 1: *chabilā*: 'Chabīlā: epithet of Kṛṣṇa'[160]
Stanza 7, Line 2: *maya* (Sk: *maeā*); *tuṅ* (GH); *man* (GH)
Stanza 7, Line 2: *maya*: read: *mayā*
Stanza 7, Line 2: *bic*: read: *bich*

Stanza 8, Line 1: *joban* (GH)
Stanza 8, Line 1: *cañcal*: read: *chañchal*
Stanza 8, Line 1: *cālā*: read: *chālā*
Stanza 8, Line 1: *jobaṇ*: 'Jobana: epithet of Kṛṣṇa'[161]
Stanza 8, Line 2: *mohabat*: read: *mohobat*

Stanza 9, Line 1: *ramajakā* (G: *ram-*); *piā* (GH); *meṅ* (H: *men, meṅe*); *huṅ* (G)
Stanza 9, Line 2: *iśk*: first letter illegible. Gujarātī version notes it as 'i.'[162]
Stanza 9, Line 2: *bhulāvo* (GH: *bhul-*)

Stanza 10, Line 1: *tab* (H); *hırakheā* (*harakh, hirakh*: Sk: *harṣa-*)
Stanza 10, Line 1: *hırakheā*: read: *hirakheā*
Stanza 10, Line 2: *kaṅthi* (*kaṅth-*: Sk: *kathayati*); *suṇāya* (GS: *suṇā-*)

[160] Kassam, *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance*, 205.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Gujarātī version from Jiwa, n.p.

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(૮૪) ગિનાન અબ તેરિ મોહબતુ.

અબ તેરિ મોહ મોડ્રોમન યાગ,
દીય મોરે મોડ્રોમન યાગ;
મેજુંસે મેલ મિયાવો-ઓ મોરે સાડ્રેમ. (૧)
અબ ખોયો પરદા સબજુખ દેખો,
રૂંસ રૂંસ જુખ દિખયાવો-ઓ મોરે સાડ્રેમ. (૨)
અબ મોહ ભુરમાંરે ખાર ઐંસલ ખિંલાસા,
દરસલ દાલ દીયાવો-ઓ મોરે સાડ્રેમ. (૩)
અબ રુમાજુંં હુસ બ મરહબ ૬ ખાનાર,
રુમાજુંં સંગ જયાવો-ઓ મોરે સાડ્રેમ. (૪)
અબ જુવાબા દીવાબા બેા જુરુ બ બિજોગ,
જાજંબદીકરા બાર જયાવો-ઓ મોરે સાડ્રેમ.(૫)
અબ નાઐસ મૌર મોરે સાખ જયેગા,
દોસમા દીય મિજ યાવો-ઓ મોરે સાડ્રેમ. (૬)
અબ ચેય રહમયા ૫ ભુબો નયમેયા,
માબા ડું માબ મિજ યાવો-ઓ મોરે સાડ્રેમ. (૭)
અબ જંજય જાયા ૫ ઓમબ માબવાયા,
મોડ્રમા માબમોં યાવો-ઓ મોરે સાડ્રેમ. (૮)
અબ મોહ રમામરા ખાના મોં ડું દીવાના,
ઔસે નામરય જુયાવો-ઓ મોરે સાડ્રેમ. (૯)
અબ જુખડા દેખે-ના નમ મબ રૂરબે-ના,
ખારઐંસલ રંખા ભુલાબા-ઓ મોરે સાડ્રેમ.(૧૦)

Khojkī text of the Ginān *Ab teri mohobat laagi*

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અબ તેરી મોહોબત લાગી

પીર શમસ

એજી અબ તેરી મોહોબત લાગી,
દીલ મેરે મોહોબત લાગી;
નેનુંસે નેન મીલાવો - ઓ મેરે સાહેબ ૧
એજી ખોલો પરદા સનમુખ દેખો,
હસ હસ મુખ દીખલાવોં - ઓ મેરે સાહેબ ૨
એજી તેરી સુરતકે પીર શમસ પીયાસા,
દરસન દાન દીલાવો - ઓ મેરે સાહેબ ૩
એજી હમસું રીસ ન કરીએ ઓ પીઆરા,
હમકું સંગ ચલાવો - ઓ મેરે સાહેબ ૪
એજી જુવાની દીવાની સો કુછ ન નીભેગી,
જ્યું નદીચુંકા નીર ચલાવો - ઓ મેરે સાહેબ ૫
એજી આશક તેરા તેરે સાથ ચલેગા,
દોસ્તી દીલ બીચ લાવો - ઓ મેરે સાહેબ ૬
એજી છેલ છબીલા એ સુનો અલબેલા,
મયા તું મન બીચ લાવો - ઓ મેરે સાહેબ ૭
એજી ચંચલ ચાલા એ જોબન મતવાલા,
મોહોબત મનમેં લાવો - ઓ મેરે સાહેબ ૮
એજી તેરી રમઝકા પીઆ મેં હું દીવાના,
ઈશક અક્લ ભુલાવો - ઓ મેરે સાહેબ ૯
એજી મુખડા દેખીઆ તબ મન હરખેઆ,
પીર શમસ કંથી સુણાયા - ઓ મેરે સાહેબ ૧૦

Source: 100 Ginan-ni chopadi bhaag bijo Khojki 3rd edition, 1919,
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Ginan No. 84
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November 2003

Gujarati version of the Ginān *Ab teri mohobat laagi*

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CHAPTER THREE

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PRACTICE: THE *BĀṬIN* TRADITION

O master *yogī*, make the way your bag, contentment your vessel, and make meditation your staff. Wear patience and compassion as your two earrings, and make knowledge [*gınān*] your food...Meditate truly upon the True Faith [*sāc dharam*], for thus does a *yogī* become a master....

-Pīr Shams' *ginān*, *Abadhu* ("The Master Yogī")[1]

ORIGINS

Tracing the origins of yoga and asceticism is a difficult task for scholars. Ramdas Lamb notes:

> In attempting to understand any Indian ascetic tradition, we are often left to depend on secondary sources for information, since ascetics have seldom ever written about themselves and their practices. Thus, as is the case with most of our understanding of the past in India, we must rely on speculation in our interpretation of these secondary sources.[2]

These writings inform us that during Vedic times, life was meant to be lived fully from birth to death.[3] The here-and-now was considered important.[4] However, not all lived in this state. There were those who sought to remove themselves from the humdrum of everyday life. For example, in the 3rd millennium BCE, i.e., during the Indus Valley civilization, material remains

[1] See Christopher Shackle and Zawahir Moir, *Ismaili Hymns from South Asia: An Introduction to the Ginans* (London: The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1992), 153.
[2] Ramdas Lamb, "Rāja Yoga, Asceticism, and the Rāmānanda Saṃpradāy," in *Theory and Practice of Yoga: Essays in Honour of Gerald James Larson*, ed. Knut A. Jacobsen (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 321.
[3] M.G. Bhagat, *Ancient Indian Asceticism* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1976), 67 and 321. "[I]t can be said in all fairness that the people of India had, on the whole, their share of the natural joys of life, which was full of optimism. The Vedic age was an age of the appreciation of the good things of life and of strenuous effort to secure them. There was a vigorous pursuit of material life and the desire for prosperity. To live a full life with material blessings was a worthy ideal" (Ibid., 321).
[4] "[T]he oldest known Vedic texts are concerned with enjoyment (*bhukti*) of the earthly world, not with release from it" (A.M. Esnoul, s.v. Mokṣa, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 9: Mary – Ndembu Religion, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 6115).

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reveal that meditation was practiced.[5] Furthermore, it is also known that before the Āryans entered the Indus Valley, the inhabitants there performed meditation.[6] Meditation is an important aspect of *yogic* and ascetic practices, an essential technique needed to calm and tame the mind and body. Many centuries later, the importance of meditation will also be espoused by Patañjali and Pīr Shams.

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As noted in chapter two, 'Alī in his ninth *avatāra* appeared as Buddha.[7] When we approach the period of the Buddha (sixth through the fourth centuries BCE),[8] we read of *yogins* wandering the cities and wilderness. Before becoming the Buddha ("Enlightened One"), Prince Siddhārtha Gautama joined the ascetic path, but since no definite results were had, he concluded that on the path to *nirvāṇa*, neither severe austerities nor being of the world were acceptable. A middle path was needed. This he called

> ...the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya-Aṭṭhaṅgika-Magga*)...: namely, (i) Right Understanding (*Sammā diṭṭhi*), (ii) Right Thought (*Sammā saṅkappa*), (iii) Right Speech (*Sammā vācā*), (iv) Right Action (*Sammā kammanta*), (v) Right Livelihood (*Sammā ājīva*), (vi) Right Effort (*Sammā vāyāma*), (vii) Right Mindfulness (*Sammā sati*), [and] (viii) Right Concentration (*Sammā samādhi*).[9]

[5] Frederic B. Underwood, s.v. Meditation, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 9: Mary – Ndembu Religion, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 5819. "Artifacts...can be interpreted as representing individuals or deities in meditative attitudes" (Ibid.).

[6] Bhagat, 16. "They worshipped a *three-faced deity and Mother Goddess* and also knew some sort of meditation" (Ibid.). "[W]hen the Vedic Āryans migrated into India, they did not step into a religious vacuum" (R.N. Dandekar, s.v. Vaiṣṇavism: Bhāgavatas, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 14: Transcendental Meditation – Zwingli, Huldrych, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 9498).

[7] Gulshan Khakee, "*The Dasa Avatāra of the Satpanthi Ismailis and the Imam Shahis of Indo-Pakistan*" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1972), 30.

[8] Frank E. Reynolds and Charles Hallisey, s.v. Buddha, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 2: Attributes of God – Butler, Joseph, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 1061. "[W]e can say with some certainty that the historical Buddha lived sometime during the period from the sixth through the fourth centuries BCE" (Ibid.).

[9] Walpola Sri Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught: Revised and Expanded Edition with Texts from Suttas and Dhammapada* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1974), 45.

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During the period of the *Bhagavadgītā* (c. 3rd century BCE),[10] there emerges a different meaning for what constitutes a *yogin*. The *Bhagavadgītā* emphasized non-attachment,[11] and like the Buddha, it did not encourage practices that caused harm to the body.[12]

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In the Islāmic tradition, the interest in the *yogic* quest began quite early. Ṣūfīs considered ʻAlī to be the first Ṣūfī. We have written sources that inform us that during the Umayyad period (661-750)[13] there were Muslims who were discontent with life as they saw it. Whereas other Muslims focused on rituals and the 'material world,' the Ṣūfīs looked inward. To become one with God was important for a Ṣūfī.[14]

YOGA

"All is suffering for the sage..."[15]

[10] Eliot Deutsch and Lee Siegel, s.v. Bhagavadgītā, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 2: Attributes of God – Butler, Joseph, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 852. "The *Bhagavadgītā* occupies a very small part of the *Mahābhārata*–it is but one of the Hundred Minor Books of that enormous epic..." (Ibid.). *Mahābhārata* (c. in the period of 200 BCE and 200 CE) (W. Randolph Kloetzli and Laurie Louise Patton, s.v. Cosmology: Hindu Cosmology, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 3: Cabasilas, Nicholas – Cyrus II, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 2016). Gonda provides an alternate dating for the *Mahābhārata*: c. 300 BCE-300 CE (Jan Gonda, s.v. Indian Religions: An Overview, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 7: Iconography – Justin Martyr, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 4428).

[11] "The *Bhagavadgītā*...insisted on the disinterested action as the true spiritual path..." (Kapil N. Tiwari, *Dimensions of Renunciation in Advaita Vedānta*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977), 30).

[12] "The *Gītā*...denounces all kinds of penances and practices which involve the torture of the flesh" (Bhagat, 25). "The teachings of the Buddha, the *Gītā*[,] and the *Yoga [S]ūtras* by Patañjali...emphasised the quiet and sane self-control which is the joyful positive aspect of *tapas*" (Ibid., 27). "The *tapas* in the pre-Upaniṣadic times was perhaps closer to the external mode of living and had therefore a limited bearing on the inward experience which became very central in the *Upaniṣads*" (Tiwari, 30). "Whereas Hinduism routinized *tapas* into ordinary observance of fasts, meditations, and yogalike practices, and Buddhism elected a middle path between austerity and indulgence, Jainism perfected *tapas* in both lay and monastic careers as a means of burning off old *karman* and blocking accretions of new *karman*. In Jainism and in some traditions of Tantric yoga[,] *tapas* survives today as disciplined self-mortification and as an internal experience of transformation" (David M. Knipe, s.v. Tapas, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 13: South American Indian Religions – Transcendence and Immanence, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 8998).

[13] Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʻīlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 48. ʻAlī b. Abī Ṭālib passed away in 661.

[14] "Techniques familiar in other traditions such as control of the breath, visualization of sacred words, and repetition of sacred phrases were adopted as important means to this end" (Underwood, 5818).

[15] According to Patañjali (Mircea Eliade, s.v. Yoga, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 14: Transcendental Meditation – Zwingli, Huldrych, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 9894).

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According to Patañjali, yoga is "the cessation of the transformation of awareness" (*yogaś cittavṛttinirodhaḥ*).[16] His understanding can best be explained by providing a definition of the term "yoga." Yoga comes from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, which means "to yoke."[17] For one who practices yoga (*yogī/yoginī/yogin*), the yoking implies the constant struggle to restrain the mind and detract it from worldly concerns.[18]

Having yoked the mind, the mind is still. Unlike an artist who seeks to fill the mind with ideas to create a masterpiece, the *yogī* does just the opposite. The *yogī* voids the mind of such ideas that clutter it and inhibit the soul from reaching its goal in life.[19] Furthermore, whereas the artist is attached to the end product, the *yogī* remains unattached to the result. It is only by conquering the mind that the *yogī* can continue toward the path to liberation. By this means, the *yogī*, for example, seeks: (i) the attainment of *mokṣa* (liberation) as had from the *Upaniṣadic* (*Upaniṣads*: c. 600 to 500 BCE)[20] view where *ātman* (soul) merges with *Brahman* ("the World-Soul")[21] and therefore attains Brahmanirvāṇa (*brahmanirvāṇam*);[22] or (ii) from the Ismā'īlī perspective, the merger of *ātman* with 'Alī[23] (Imām; ancient Yogī;[24] Swāmī Rājā;[25]

[16] Knut A. Jacobsen, "Introduction: Yoga Traditions," in *Theory and Practice of Yoga: Essays in Honour of Gerald James Larson*, ed. Knut A. Jacobsen (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 4.
[17] Eliade, s.v. Yoga, 9893.
[18] As Mircea Eliade notes: "[L]iberation cannot occur if one is not first 'detached' from the world, if one has not begun by withdrawing from the cosmic circuit. For without doing so, one could never succeed in finding or mastering oneself" (Idem, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 5).
[19] The term "soul" is used here for those traditions that hold that the soul is eternal.
[20] Kloetzli and Patton, 2015.
[21] Ibid., 2017. "Through mere concentration of mind one should seize that identification content as the intuitive recognition of the famous *tat tvam asi*: 'that thou art'" (Esnoul, 6116).
[22] See Winthrop Sargeant, *The Bhagavad Gītā: Twenty-fifth-Anniversary Edition* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 157.
[23] See Ali S. Asani, "From Satpanthi to Ismaili Muslim: The Articulation of Ismaili Khoja Identity in South Asia," in *A Modern History of the Ismailis: Continuity and Change in a Muslim Community*, ed. Farhad Daftary (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2011), 100-101. "...Ibn [al-]'Arabī, the thirteenth-century Spanish Ṣūfī Muslim, who taught that God, or reality, is absolutely singular, and that the human soul is indistinguishable from God" (Robert A. McDermott, s.v. Monism, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 9: Mary – Ndembu Religion, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 6146).

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Mawlā;[26] Sāheb;[27] Ḳhudāvand[28]); or (iii) from the Buddhist understanding, the attainment of

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nirvāṇa ("liberation")[29] in order never to be reborn again. Whatever the goal, "...Yoga accords marked importance to techniques of purification and meditation."[30] According to Patañjali, the steps needed for a *yogī* include:

> ...(i) restraints (*yama*), (ii) disciplines (*niyama*), (iii) bodily attitudes and postures (*āsana*), (iv) rhythm of respiration (*prāṇāyāma*), (v) emancipation of sensory activity from the domination of exterior objects (*pratyāhāra*), (vi) concentration (*dhāraṇā*), (vii) *yogic* meditation (*dhyāna*), and (viii) enstasis (*samādhi*...).[31]

Liberation can be had in the present life.[32] In his *ginān*, *Abadhu jugata jola santoṣa pātra karo ane ḍaṇḍā karo vīcāra*, Pīr Shams notes: "Die when still alive, and you will not be reborn."[33]

WHY YOGA?[34]

Reaction drives the *yogī*.[35]

[24] See "[v]erses from the *Venti* (*Supplication*) *Rūḥānī Visāl*, attributed to Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn" (Ali S. Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment: The Ismaili Devotional Literature of South Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2002), 153).
[25] See Tazim R. Kassam, *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: Hymns of the Satpanth Ismā'īlī Muslim Saint, Pīr Shams* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 204.
[26] See ibid., 237.
[27] See ibid., 245.
[28] See ibid., 258.
[29] Walter O. Kaelber, s.v. Asceticism, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 1: Aaron – Attention, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 527.
[30] Eliade, s.v. Yoga, 9894. "In Yoga, the method of practice...[is] one of concentration, meditation, and introspection, issuing into a direct *yogic* perception (*yogī-pratyakṣa*) of what truly is, a type of knowledge that is entirely intuitive and nonconceptual, bypassing the 'turnings of thought' entirely" (David Gordon White, *The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali: A Biography* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014), 29). "Yoga philosophy postulates that the mind-stuff, or more properly speaking, Nature's highest evolute, the intellect, has the power to penetrate anywhere and expand infinitely" (Ibid., 30).
[31] Eliade, s.v. Yoga, 9894. "*[Y]ama* and *niyama*...constitute the inevitable preliminaries for any asceticism. There are five 'restraints,' namely, *ahiṃsā* (restraint from violence), *satya* (restraint from falsehood), *asteya* (restraint from stealing), *brahmacarya* (restraint from sexual activity), and *aparigraha* (restraint from avarice). These restraints do not bring about a specifically *yogic* state but induce in the adept a purified state superior to that of the uninitiated. In conjunction with the *yamas*, the *yogin* must practice the *niyama*, that is, a series of bodily and psychic disciplines" (Ibid.).
[32] Eliade notes: "Like a dead person, the *yogin* has no more real relation with life, but is a *jīvanmukta*, one 'liberated in life.' The *yogin* no longer lives in time and under the domination of time, but in an eternal present" (Ibid., 9896).
[33] Kassam, 275-276.
[34] Was ist die Absicht?
[35] Author's epigraph.

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> The transitory nature of the world has led many to seek alternatives, a means to rid themselves of the illusion that ever so binds them to the world.[36]

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> It is according to his actions that a man has a good or bad destiny: [T]he builder of walls goes up, the builder of wells down.[37]

According to the Indian tradition, the factor underlying the perpetual cycle of death and rebirth (*saṃsāra*)[38] is the result of one's *karman* (action).[39] The desire and attachment to the actions are what produce positive or negative *karman*.[40] This is known as "...dependent arising...: 'When this arises, that arises; when this is not, that is not.'"[41] One way to defeat *saṃsāra* is to practice *bhakti-yoga* ("the loving surrender to God's will").[42] Kṛṣṇa ("that is, God")[43] notes in the *Bhagavadgītā* ("Song of the Blessed Lord"):[44]

> 'Those who dedicate all of their actions [*karman*] to Me,
> intent on Me, with unwavering discipline, meditating
> on Me; those who revere Me–for those I am the
> Savior from the sea of the cycle of deaths';
> those who see their actions as God's
> actions and the results as God's
> will 'are also liberated from
> the traps of *karman.*'[45]

[36] Ibid. Eliade notes: "...Yoga believes that the subconscious can be dominated by asceticism and even conquered through employing the technique for unification of the states of consciousness..." (Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 46).
[37] James Mallinson, "The Original *Gorakṣaśataka*," in *Yoga in Practice*, ed. David Gordon White (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), 267.
[38] William K. Mahony, s.v. Karman: Hindu and Jain Concepts, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 8: Ka'bah – Marx, Karl, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 5095.
[39] Ibid., 5094. "[T]he word *karma*...[is] the nominative form of the Sanskrit *karman*..." (Ibid.). "The term is based on the Sanskrit verbal root *kr*, meaning 'act, do, bring about,' the idea being that one makes something by doing something; one creates by acting. It may be of interest to note that some linguists see the Indo-European root of the word *karman* (namely, **kwer*, 'act') in the English word *ceremony*, which can mean either a combination of sacred acts performed according to prescribed norms or a system of proper behavior that keeps the world running smoothly" (Ibid.).
[40] Ibid., 5097.
[41] Dennis Hirota, s.v. Karman: Buddhist Concepts, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 8: Ka'bah – Marx, Karl, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 5098.
[42] Mahony, 5097.
[43] Ibid. As noted in the previous chapter, 'Alī in his eighth *avatāra* appeared as Kṛṣṇa (Khakee, 28).
[44] Deutsch and Siegel, 851.
[45] Mahony, 5097. In addition to *bhaktiyoga* ("the path of devotion"), the *Bhagavadgītā* also notes that one can be liberated by practicing *jñānayoga* ("the path of knowledge") and *karmayoga* ("the path of action") (Bimal Krishna Matilal, s.v. Jñāna, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 7: Iconography – Justin Martyr, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 4928). "The *Gītā* is called the *Yogaśāstra* and Lord Kṛṣṇa the *Yogeśwara*" (Bhagat, 38).

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The notion of *karman* first came to the mind of the sacrificer who propitiated the gods by means of sacrifices (*yajña*).[46] This meant that what one did for the gods would in turn have an effect. This idea of cause and effect was further developed to include the human being's role in life, and as a result, the station of birth earned in the next life.[47] Interestingly enough, (i) actions, (ii) reincarnation, and (iii) emancipation from the bodily state were important ideas during the time of the Buddha.[48] It is said that after Prince Siddhārtha Gautama became the Buddha, he experienced three visions:

> [H]e saw his own previous lives and how each conditioned subsequent ones; he saw that beings everywhere also underwent repeated rebirths, receiving the results of acts performed in past lives; and he perceived the desires and attachments that bound one to further painful rebirth and the method by which to eradicate them.[49]

The Buddhist text, *Khuddakapātha*, says of *karman*: "[A] treasure not shared with others, which no thief can steal."[50] According to classical yoga, "[b]irth leads to death, death leads to birth. Unless the cycle is broken it never stops."[51] The *Upaniṣads* note that upon death, one is either reborn (not liberated) or unborn (liberated).[52] Those who have appeared in bodily form again have done so as they had followed in their previous lives "the 'way of the fathers' (*pitṛyāna*)."[53] Those, on the other hand, who are unborn had followed "the way of the gods (*devayāna*)."[54] The goal in life according to the *Upaniṣads* is for one to "become a god by

[46] Mahony, 5094.
[47] Ibid. "Some scholars think that too much of emphasis laid on sacrifices resulted in a sort of neglect of ethical ideas and gave rise to the practice of judging goodness by the standard of ritualistic correctness" (Tiwari, 35).
[48] Hirota, 5097.
[49] Ibid., 5098.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Mahony, 5095.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid. "The lower path, one on which the person eventually returns to earth in a subsequent birth, is described as the 'way of the fathers' (*pitṛyāna*) and is traveled by those who perform the rituals in hopes of material gain" (Ibid.).
[54] Ibid. "The higher path, the way of the gods (*devayāna*), is one that does not lead to rebirth on earth and is taken by those who have renounced worldly ends and practice austerities in the forest" (Ibid.).

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his actions" (*karma-deva*).[55] In his *ginān*, *Satapantha voharī vīrā alagā na rahīye*, Pīr Shams

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says:

> Conduct yourselves carefully! For when you are reborn again,
> you may not gain the human form. This body of yours
> is like a bouquet of flowers; [t]here is no way to
> save it [from withering away]....[56]

TYPOLOGY OF ASCETICS[57]

> Being an ascetic, yet not immersed in asceticism,
> that bliss remains concealed from him....[58]

In the subcontinent, the practices done by the *yogin* are performed not to become victorious over another, but to become victorious over oneself, i.e., to conquer oneself. This can best be termed as "inner asceticism."[59] According to yoga philosophy, the mind (*citta*) is seen as "the repository of *saṃskāra* ('the root impressions of past deeds')."[60] Therefore, for the *yogin*, the obstacles reside in the mind, and by having mastery over the mind, the body is tamed. Constant practice (*sādhana*) is the *yogin's* whip.

In the history of asceticism, various methods have been used by *yogins* to overcome the mind. The *Rāmāyaṇa* alludes to a number of forest dwelling ascetics. In the Jain tradition, for example, the Digambara monks wear no clothes and have accordingly been coined "sky-

[55] See ibid. "From the time of the *Upaniṣads*[,] India rejects the world as it is and devaluates life as it reveals itself to the eyes of the sage–ephemeral, painful, illusory" (Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 10).
[56] Kassam, 273-274.
[57] "The ascetic in ancient India was known by many terms: *Vānaprasthin*, *Tapasvin*, *Yogin*, *Tāpas*, *Yatin*, *Vairāgin*, *Vairāṅgika*, *Muni*, *Parikāñṣin*, *Saṃnyāsin*[,] and *Vaikhānasa*" (Bhagat, 10).
[58] Hasina M. Jamani, "*Brahm Prakāsh*: A Translation and Analysis" (MA Thesis, McGill University, 1985), 42.
[59] Kaelber, 527.
[60] Underwood, 5819.

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clad."[61] These various forms of asceticism described can best be deemed as "'world-rejecting asceticism' (*weltablehnende Askese*)."[62]

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INDIAN ASCETICS[63]

> O Brother! The *jogī*[64] is one who practices discipline (*yoga*);
> And the *bhogī* is one who remains enticed by the world....[65]

As mentioned in the second chapter, 'Alī in his seventh *avatāra* appeared as Rāma.[66] The Hindu tradition has preserved an interesting encounter between the female ascetic, Shabarī, and the hero of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Rāma. Shabarī's unwavering devotion – in this case, a form of *siddhi* ("spiritual power") acquired from constant devotional practice – to Rāma was such that no day passed without her setting aside the best fruits for her *Rājā* (King)[67] hoping that one day he would come and delight in them. In addition to this devotional act, she decked the floor with new cow dung and flowers. This she did every day.[68] All this for Rāma; she lived for Rāma, whereas there were ascetics, devotees of Rāma, in her religious order who were primarily concerned about the external performance of rituals.[69] The day finally arrived when Rāma and his brother, Lakṣmaṇa, payed Shabarī a visit. Rāma asked: "Where is Shabarī?" "Where is that fortunate woman (*bhāgavatī*)? My eyes thirst to see her."[70] The interesting

[61] Kaelber, 529. "...Mahāvīra Vardhamāna, who, according to Digambara tradition, wandered naked and homeless as he practiced nonviolence, truthfulness, honesty, renunciation of possessions, and sexual abstinence" (Mahony, 5096).
[62] Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 166.
[63] "[T]erms for a renouncer...[include:] *parivrājaka* ('wanderer') and *bhikṣu* ('mendicant')..." (Patrick Olivelle, s.v. Saṃnyāsa, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 12: Rnying Ma Pa – Soul, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 8093).
[64] Read: *yogī*.
[65] Pīr Shams' *ginān*, *Jīrebhāī antara jāmī antara sāmī īsa dunīyāme kucha nāhī* (Kassam, 190).
[66] Khakee, 26.
[67] Shackle and Moir, 239.
[68] Philip Lutgendorf, "Dining Out at Lake Pampa: The Shabari Episode in Multiple Ramayanas," in *Questioning Ramayanas: A South Asian Tradition*, ed. Paula Richman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 129.
[69] Shabarī was not only female, but was considered low-caste (Ibid.). She was "inwardly pure though outwardly polluted," whereas the ascetics (sādhus) were "outwardly pure" but "inwardly defiled" (Ibid., 129).
[70] Citied in ibid., 128.

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characteristic about Shabarī is that she recognized Rāma immediately, whereas a number of the ascetics failed to recognize the presence of Rāma in their own village.[71] The Rāma story notes that Rāma was very pleased with the fruits; he delighted in them.[72]

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Just as Shabarī is remembered for her love of the Divine in the Indian tradition, the female ascetic, Rābi'ah al-'Adawīyah (d. 801), in the Islāmic tradition was a champion for her love of the Divine. After being freed from servitude, "...[Rābi'ah's] life thereafter, marked by austerity and otherworldliness, was spent largely in retirement, although her sanctity attracted many who sought her prayers and teachings."[73] Another prominent Muslim ascetic, al-Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (857-922), was so ecstatic about his love of the Divine that Muslims regarded him as "the martyr of mystical love."[74] It is said that during his time, Baghdād was a place that fostered "mystical learning" and that among his teachers was al-Junayd.[75] Feeling discontent with al-Junayd, al-Ḥallāj

> discarded the Ṣūfī gown and wandered through Irān and Khurāsān before making his second pilgrimage, along with four hundred disciples. He next set out for India, 'to learn magic,' according to his adversaries, 'to call the people to God,' by his own account. From Gujarāt he wandered through Sind and the Pañjāb and reached Turfan [Turpan], probably via Kashmīr.[76]

[71] Citied in ibid. It is noted that they were preoccupied "worrying about the polluted lake" (See citied in ibid.).
[72] Citied in ibid., 125.
[73] Annemarie Schimmel, s.v. Rābi'ah al-'Adawīyah, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 11: Pius IX – Rivers, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 7591. "Rābi'ah of Basra is regarded as the person who introduced the concept of pure love of God into the ascetic way of life prevalent among God-seeking Muslims during the second century AH [the seventh and eighth centuries CE]" (Ibid.).
[74] Idem, s.v. Ḥallāj, al-, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 6: Goddess Worship – Iconoclasm, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 3755.
[75] Ibid., 3756. "The French scholar[,] Louis Massignon[,] has shown how confused the political situation in Baghdād was during those decades; the caliphs were powerless and the viziers, in whose hands the true power lay, changed frequently. Sunnī and Shī'ī allegiances were played out against each other, and fear of the Qarāmiṭah, who threatened the 'Abbāsid empire from their stronghold in Bahrein, made unusual religious claims appear particularly dangerous. Was it not possible, so the authorities asked, that al-Ḥallāj had been in touch with the Qarāmiṭah, who had just founded a principality in Multān and who ruled northern Sind" (Ibid.)? "[W]henever the dangerous power of love is described, the name Manṣūr appears. Interestingly, it is most prominent in the folk poetry of Sind and the areas through which al-Ḥallāj wandered shortly after 900 (even in the Isma'īlī verses called *ginān*s). There, the bards sing how 'the gallows became his bridal bed' and praise him as the one who drank and dispensed intoxicating spiritual wine, the wine of unity" (Ibid., 3758).
[76] Ibid., 3756.

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Another prominent practitioner was the fifteenth century poet,[77] Kabīr,[78] who at one time was a follower of the Hindu spiritual teacher, Rāmānanda (c. 1370-1440).[79] The spiritual life was so important to Kabīr[80] that he held that scripture was not important.[81] He says:

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> The *yogin* who was there has disappeared:
> Ashes alone keep the posture.[82]

SUB-CONCLUSION

Locating the origins of yoga and asceticism poses a serious problem for the scholar. What we do know is that for the early *yogin* and ascetic alike, the unfocused mind was seen as a stumbling block toward reaching the goal, whatever that goal may have been. It was therefore important that the mind be tamed. For this purpose, various methods were used to free the mind from its attachment to the world, which practitioners saw as a distraction. The Indic-*yogī*, for example, held that past deeds were the cause of their present state in life. Not

[77] Charlotte Vaudeville, s.v. Kabīr, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 8: Ka'bah – Marx, Karl, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 5051-5052.

[78] "In North India[,] Kabīr and Nānak (the first Sikh *guru*) were sharply critical both of popular piety and of the religious establishments, Hindu as well as Muslim" (John B. Carman, s.v. Bhakti, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 2: Attributes of God – Butler, Joseph, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 858). "[I]n the fifties[,] a Khojā travelling in Pañjāb for commercial purposes was told by a Sikh that Nānak had been Pīr Shams' disciple" (See Dominique-Sila Khan, *Conversions and Shifting Identities: Ramdev Pir and the Ismailis in Rajasthan* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2003), 249). "Guru Nānak...was a Khatrī by caste. Even before Guruship became hereditary, it was a tradition to select the leaders of the sect from among them. Incidentally, the Khatrīs share at least one common trait with the Khojās (ex-Lohanas converted by [Pīr] Ṣadr al-Dīn to Ismā'īlism and renamed 'Khojās'): both are trade communities and both claim a Kṣatriya origin" (Ibid., 249-250). "Nānak, who appeared with a Hindu identity as is amply attested to in the tradition, may have been in reality a Shamsī 'Guptī' from the Khatrī caste, that is, not a direct disciple, but a follower of Shams who, like all his coreligionists in Muslim ruled Pañjāb practised *taqiyyah*, appearing outwardly as a Hindu...[H]e did not follow faithfully the path of his ancestors who presumably had been converted by Shams to Ismā'īlism" (See ibid., 250).

[79] Wendy Doniger, *The Hindus: An Alternative History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 462.

[80] Vaudeville, 5053.

[81] Ibid., 5052. "For Kabīr, there could be no revealed religion at all–no *Veda*, no *Qur'ān*. All scriptural authority he emphatically denied, and he warned people against searching for truth in 'holy books': 'Reading, reading, the whole world died–and no one ever became learned'" (Ibid.). "[T]hough Kabīr often speaks of the *satguru* (the 'perfect *guru*')[,] it is clear that he is not alluding to Rāmānand[a], his putative *guru*, nor to any human *guru*. For Kabīr, the *satguru* is the One who speaks within the soul itself. Although he often borrows the language of Tantric yoga and its paradoxical style to suggest the 'ineffable word,' Kabīr held all *yogic* exercises to be absurd contortions and the *yogīs'* pretention to immortality as utter nonsense" (Ibid.).

[82] Ibid., 5053. "For one who has found the hidden 'diamond,' for one who has passed 'the unreachable pass,' eternity is achieved. Mortal life seems to linger, though in truth nothing remains but a fragile appearance" (Ibid., 5052).

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wanting to go through the cycle again, they sought *mokṣa*. As we will come to see, the *yogic* and ascetic path is a difficult one; therefore, the master becomes the indispensable guide.

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THE MASTER: REVEALER OF THE ESOTERIC

My Lord Yogī, be merciful;
Take me to safety.
This evil age [*kaliyuga*] is full of deceit and falsehood,
So rescue me soon from it....[83]

Khalwat dar anjuman[84]

In the Ṣūfī tradition, the path to *fanā fillāh* ('annihilation of the self in God')[85] may be realized with the aid of a master. For example, when the master, Shams al-Dīn Tabrīzī, met Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Shams flung Rūmī's books into a fountain. Without Shams, it can be said that Rūmī would not have tasted bliss. This object lesson was essential for Rūmī to realize that what is of essence is within the body. As it is said, "[t]he body is the temple that houses the soul." For the Buddhist Vajrayāna and Indian Tantrism as well, "[t]he body, in fact, is seen as a means toward salvation, a servant of the spirit requiring nurture, even praise."[86] In the *Bhagavadgītā*, Kṛṣṇa is seen as the Master Yogī. Arjuna says:

My limbs sink down,
My mouth dries up,
My body trembles,
And my hair stands on end....[87]

Kṛṣṇa consoles Arjuna:

[83] See "[v]erses from the *Venti* (*Supplication*) *Rūḥānī Visāl*, attributed to Pīr Ḥasan Kabīr al-Dīn" (Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment*, 153-159).
[84] "The ideal of the Muslim spiritual masters is 'solitude in the midst of the multitude' (*khalwat dar anjuman*), that is, a state of remaining habitually in the presence of God without being touched by the tumult of one's surroundings. As means for achieving this state[,] spiritual masters recommend detachment, silence, and interior peace. Some Ṣūfī orders insist on both material and spiritual withdrawal or retreat" (John Manuel Lozano, s.v. Eremitism, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 4: Dacian Riders – Esther, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 2828).
[85] See Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), 342 and 366.
[86] Kaelber, 529.
[87] Sargeant, 67.

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[D]evote yourself to yoga! Yoga is skill in action.[88]

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The Imām as ancient Yogī and 'inner-worldly ascetic'[89] in the Ismā'īlī tradition provides the requisite steps needed for his *murīdān* (disciples) to obtain *fanā fillāh*.[90] The Ismā'īlīs view their Imām as the keeper and revealer of the *bol* or *al-ism al-a'ẓam* ("the great Name").[91] For the *murīd*, the Imām familiarizes the disciple with the unfamiliar. Moreover, according to the Ismā'īlī tradition, the Imām is *'aql-i kull* (Universal Intellect),[92] therefore his knowledge and instruction are to be received as matters of fact.[93] Language is variable, but the words of the Imām for the Ismā'īlī disciple are ever binding. It follows then that without the aid of a master the endeavor is difficult. Rūmī concurs: "[W]hoever travels without a guide needs two hundred years for a two day's journey."[94]

In the same light, one who practices yoga needs a master.[95] No *yogin* is alike. Each has a unique form of practice.[96] For those who practice *kumbhaka* ("retention of breath"), a *guru*

[88] Ibid., 135.
[89] Weber, 166. "'[I]nner-wordly asceticism' (*inner-weltliche Askese*). In this case[,] the world is presented to the religious virtuoso as his responsibility" (Ibid.). "[T]he most thoroughgoing expression of inner-worldly asceticism appears in the reformed traditions of Protestantism. A disciplined, methodical, controlled – in short, ascetic – pursuit of one's vocation in the world came to be seen as both service to God and confirmation of one's salvation" (Kaelber, 529).
[90] "The bond of love between the Imām and his followers is readily apparent to anyone who is acquainted with modern Nizārī Ismā'īlī communities. The Nizārī Ismā'īlīs consider their Imām to be their 'spiritual father and mother,' while the Imām in turn refers to his followers as 'my beloved spiritual children.' It is crucial to bear in mind this spiritual basis for the love and devotion shown to the Imām for it goes a long way in explaining the centrality of the Imāmate for Ismā'īlīs, and why they have upheld their faith in the Imām despite severe persecution over the centuries" (Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment*, 67).
[91] Jamani, 9.
[92] See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Persia*, ed. Mehdi Amin Razavi (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 373.
[93] See Farhad Daftary, *Ismailis in Medieval Muslim Societies* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005), 216.
[94] William K. Mahony, s.v. Spiritual Discipline, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 13: South American Indian Religions – Transcendence and Immanence, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 8699.
[95] Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 5. "One does not learn Yoga by oneself; the guidance of a master (*guru*) is necessary. Strictly speaking, all the other 'systems of philosophy' – as, in fact, all traditional disciplines or crafts – are, in India, taught by masters and are thus initiations; for millenniums they have been transmitted orally, 'from mouth to ear.' But Yoga is even more markedly initiatory in character. For, as in other religious initiations, the *yogin* begins by forsaking the profane world (family, society) and, guided by his *guru*, applies himself to passing successively beyond the behavior patterns and values proper to the human condition" (Ibid.).
[96] See Eliade, s.v. Yoga, 9893.

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is definitely needed.[97] This technique is seen as rewarding, but if executed improperly, it can lead to death.[98] It must be noted here that unlike Pīr Shams' *ginān*, *Brahm Prakāsh*, Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtra* does not provide step by step instructions; hence, one has to have a master as a guide to understand its meaning.[99] Whether Pīr Shams was aware of Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtra* remains uncertain. The assumption here is that the *pīrs* were drawing directly from a written textual tradition. It is, however, evident from the polythematic and polyglottic nature of the *ginān*s that the *pīrs* were drawing from a rich oral tradition in the subcontinent. As a result, it is necessary to look at thematic parallels rather than textual ones since the latter are not readily evidenced in our extant sources.

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THE *YOGIN* WITHIN

According to the Ismā'īlīs, every human being is composed of two principles: (i) esoteric principle (soul) and (ii) exoteric principle (body). Upon death, the soul remains eternal and the body fades away, i.e., it mingles with the earth.[100]

> For the born, death is certain;
> For the dead[,] there is certainly birth....[101]

Scriptures (e.g., *Brāhmaṇas*: c. 900 BCE)[102] that focus on the external are eventually redefined by new scriptures (e.g., *Upaniṣads*) that focus on the internal. The result of this shift was the creation of two mutually exclusive propositions. However, with the introduction of the

[97] I.K. Taimni, *The Science of Yoga: The Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali in Sanskrit with Transliteration in Roman, Translation and Commentary in English* (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1961), 261.
[98] "If all the requisite conditions are present and *[k]umbhaka* is practised under the guidance of a competent teacher[,] it unlocks the doors of unexpected experiences and powers. If it is taken up without the necessary preparation and guidance[,] it is sure to lead to disaster and maybe death as many rash and foolish people have found to their cost" (Ibid., 262).
[99] Ibid., 266.
[100] See Kassam, 169.
[101] Sargeant, 112.
[102] Kloetzli and Patton, 2014.

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Bhagavadgītā, the focus was on fulfilling one's external and inner *dharma*. The Divine pervaded one's life and one's *dharma*:

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> By worshiping with his own proper duty
> Him from whom all beings have their origin,
> Him by whom all this universe is pervaded,
> Man finds perfection.[103]

In the Ismā'īlī tradition, balance is what is espoused, i.e., one has to fulfill one's material and spiritual *dharma*. In fact, this practice of balance is very much in tune with the balance of life as evidenced in the *Bhagavadgītā*.[104]

Among the Ismā'īlī *maṇḍlīs* (Sanskrit: "a circle or a group coming together")[105] that congregate in the *jamā'at-khāna*, *Bayt al-khyāl* ("chamber of contemplation")[106] is one that caters to the meditative aspect of the tradition, and therefore takes precedence.[107] The *murīd*, i.e., the disciple of the Imām, performs meditation daily at four in the morning.[108] The soul according to the Ismā'īlī tradition can reach such heights that it eventually merges with 'Alī. This in the Ismā'īlī tradition is referred to as *darśan* (direct vision of the soul with 'Alī).[109]

[103] Sargeant, 707.
[104] "[T]he *Gītā* shows how this attainment for spiritual life is possible even when living a worldly life" (Bhagat, 31).
[105] See Ciril J. Kuttiyanikkal, *Khrist Bhakta Movement: A Model for an Indian Church?: Inculturation in the Area of Community Building* (Zürich: LIT Verlag GmbH & Co., 2014), 216.
[106] Jamani, 9.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy, "Sacred Songs of Khoja Muslims: Sounded and Embodied Liturgy and Devotion," *Ethnomusicology* 48:2 (Spring/Summer 2004): 258. "Congregating during the hours of darkness is a longstanding tradition for the daily rituals, not only because those times are believed to be the best for meditation, but perhaps also because of the tradition of secrecy. Thus, the two daily communal settings are held before sunrise (*prabhātiyā*) and after sunset (*sānji*) in the brightly-lit communal prayer hall. The daily gatherings at 4:00 a.m. are described as being especially uplifting and ethereal, featuring special *ginān*s that relate to mystical and esoteric practices, particularly prior to the morning meditation. Just before sunset and the beginning of the evening rituals, worshippers gradually enter the building, remove their shoes, and walk into the prayer hall. They seat themselves for silent prayer on woven mats facing a *pāṭh*, a low table covered in white, behind which the dignitaries of the *jamā'at* (*mukhī*, the male leader, often with his wife the *mukhiyānī*, and other officers) gradually seat themselves on mats facing the congregation...An informal silence forms a major part of the ritual soundscape" (Ibid., 258-259). "It is interesting to note that even the time period specified for meditation in the *ginān* is in accordance with the initial period of the *Yogic* practises" (Jamani, 96). Regarding meditation, Eliade notes: "[E]ffort must disappear, the position of meditation must become natural; only then does it further concentration" (Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 53).
[109] "The attainment of *darśan* [('Illumination')] forms the basis for...[the *murīd's*] *mokṣa* (liberation) from human life on earth" (Jamani, 9).

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When the soul merges with ʻAlī, it becomes ʻAlī, and has therefore received *brahm sukh* ("divine bliss"), i.e., it has mingled with the Light (*Nūr*).[110]

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Liberation can be had while still living.[111] To this end, the Ismāʻīlī *murīd* receives the great Name from the Imām.[112] Its recitation serves as a *mantra*[113] that helps unify the *murīd* with the Imām.[114] "The verbal repetition is interpreted as a breath upon breath technique."[115]

As has been illustrated, the *bāṭin* characterizes the Ismāʻīlī tradition; hence, spiritual practice was essential to Pīr Shams, the *murshid*.[116] The breath was important in that the divine name issued from it.[117] Hasina M. Jamani notes:

> The *Yogīs* maintain that the reversal of the breathing process leads to control and ultimately to the paralysing of the mind (*man*). The *man* is conceived as the controller of the senses. The *man*, therefore, is considered to be the greatest obstacle in the *Yogī's* progress toward attaining liberation. Through the control of the mind, which the *Yogīs* call 'killing of the mind' – *unmani*, the *Yogī* is said to reach the highest state.[118]

The Ismāʻīlī tradition holds that by repeating the great Name, the *yogin* within emerges and like the Tantric tradition, the *kuṇḍalinī* ('serpent power') within the body moves up and finally becomes one with Śiva; *śakti* ("the female energy of the Supreme Divinity Śiva")[119]

[110] Ibid., 9-10.
[111] "For to attain the divine vision of the Lord is equated with the attainment of *mokṣa* (liberation) from human life on earth" (Jamani, 36). "[T]he goal of a believer, traversing the spiritual path, was to 'know' the Imām. For to know the Imām was equal to knowing God" (Ibid., 19).
[112] Ibid., 9.
[113] "[A] *mantra* is an efficacious sound or utterance" (Frederick M. Smith, s.v. Mantra, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. 8: Kaʻbah – Marx, Karl, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 5676). "*[M]antras* function as vehicles to meditation..." (Ibid., 5677). "...Haṭha Yoga is also called *Kuṇḍalinī-śakti Yoga*. The essential feature of this Yoga is that it requires the help of a *mantra*, 'word' or 'spell' for its success" (Jamani, 61).
[114] Ibid., 71 and 75.
[115] Ibid., 79.
[116] Arabic: مرشد "spiritual teacher" (John Norman Hollister, *The Shiʻa of India* (London: Luzac & Company, 1979), 318).
[117] Jamani, 46 and 79-80. In his *Brahm Prakāsh*, Pīr Shams notes: "For nine months the Name is held, in the same state of meditation and in the same abode of happiness" (Ibid., 46).
[118] Ibid., 65-66.
[119] Ibid., 61.

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becomes one with Śiva ("the Lord of consciousness").[120] Accordingly, the Ismā'īlī practitioner

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reaches higher and higher states and upon the will of the Imām, the 'lesser *ātman*' merges with the 'greater *ātman*' ('Alī).[121] Unification is had. No distinction exists.

PĪRS, HINDU ASCETICS AND ṢŪFĪS

During the reign of Imām Qāsim Shāh, Pīr Shams'[122] (d. 1356)[123] was sent on a *da'wah*[124] to Kutch,[125] Sind,[126] Pañjāb, Kashmīr, and Bengal.[127] His mission concentrated on the conversion of Hindus and Muslims.[128] Coming from a path that emphasized the *bāṭin*, he came

[120] See ibid. and 70. "[T]he *Brahm Prakāsh* seems to super-impose a Shī'ī form of Islām upon the Haṭha Yoga frame-work of the Tantric tradition" (Ibid., 70).
[121] "The culmination of this relationship is seen as a spiritual union between the inner reality of a *murīd* and the inner reality of the Imām[,] i.e.[,] union with God" (Ibid., 71).
[122] Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 442. "...Pīr Shams al-Dīn Sabzawārī...traced his descent to Imām Ismā'īl through Sayyid Hashamalī b. Aḥmad Hādī who had gone to Cairo from the Yaman. Hashamalī's mother was Khairan Nisa, who also traced her genealogy to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. It was Hashamalī who was entrusted to accompany Shāh Hādī, son of Imām Nizār[,] from Cairo to Alamūt. A strong group of these Ismā'īlī *Sayyids* moved from Cairo to Sabzawār in Irān and Pīr Shams al-Dīn was from that colony" (Hollister, 332-333). "Pīr Shams al-Dīn Sabzawārī has been confused with Shams-i Tabrīzī. This latter was 'spiritual master' of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, who wrote a book of poems in his honour, entitled *Dīwān of Shams-i Tabrīz*, which has been edited and translated by R.A. Nicholson. He was the son of 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad of Alamūt, and left that fortress before its destruction, and even before Shams al-Dīn, the son of Rukn al-Dīn[,] had left. He also attained recognition as a saint, but he apparently did not go to India" (Ibid., 333). "In Rājasthān, as my field research has shown, Pīr Shams was called Samik Rishi or Samas Rishi" (Khan, 48).
[123] Hollister, 355 and see Kassam, 78.
[124] See Hollister, 333 and see Daftary, 442.
[125] Françoise Mallison, "Muslim Devotional Literature in Gujarati: Islam and Bhakti," in *Devotional Literature in South Asia: Current Research, 1985-1988*, ed. R.S. McGregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 90.
[126] Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 442. "Multān and Uchchh, in Sind" (Ibid.).
[127] Samira Sheikh, "Religious Traditions and Early Ismā'īlī History in Western India: Some Historical Perspectives on Satpanthī Literature and the Gināns," in *Gināns, Texts and Contexts: Essays on Ismaili Hymns from South Asia in Honour of Zawahir Moir*, Rev. ed., eds. Tazim R. Kassam and Françoise Mallison (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), 150. "Pīr Shams was active in Sind and Pañjāb and is also believed to have carried the message to Kashmīr and Bengal" (Ibid.). He "...was probably among the first to sow the seeds of the Nizārī *da'wah* in Sind" (Azim Nanji, *The Nizārī Ismā'īlī Tradition in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1978), 67-68). For Ismā'īlī *da'wah*, see Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, 2. "The term *da'wah* is derived from the verb to invite" (Tazim R. Kassam, "Reframing Ginānic Studies: Thoughts on Multiple Positions and Heuristic Tropes," in *Gināns, Texts and Contexts: Essays on Ismaili Hymns from South Asia in Honour of Zawahir Moir*, Rev. ed., eds. Tazim R. Kassam and Françoise Mallison (Delhi: Primus Books, 2010), 13).
[128] Nanji, 66. "Those converted by Pīr Shams came to be designated as Shamsīs or Shamsīyas...Since they were secret followers of the Ismā'īlī religion, Shamsīs have been also referred to as *Guptīs* (lit. secret)–a designation, we must insist, for all Nizārīs practising *taqiyyah* and hiding their real identity, and not for a particular branch of Ismā'īlism, as has been erroneously stated" (Khan, 41).

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to the conclusion that the various practices of pseudo-Ṣūfīs and Hindu pseudo-ascetics lacked efficacy.[129] He notes in his *Brahm Prakāsh*:

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A matted hair mendicant impressing himself as a *bhagvān* (divine),
that bliss remains hidden from him.

A mendicant applying ashes and possessing no material assets,
he did not even brush the surface of the secret to that bliss...

Nurtured by milk alone, a Śaivite hermit,
without that bliss, his physical body is desolate.

Worshipping stones, ringing bells,
those will not (even) dream of that bliss...

Carrying volumes of books for many people to notice,
without that bliss, they remained worthless...

Attaining bodily immortality through medicinal herbs,
those will never attain that bliss...

Spreading witch-craft and sorcery successfully,
that bliss remains distinct from him...

He who buries his body alive into the earth,
he forgot the passage itself to that bliss.

He who forsake[s] taste and consumed roots,
he did not obtain the taste of that bliss.

Digging a cave and burying himself into the earth,
he also did not attain this bliss.

Balancing into the air and burying into the earth,
both the means prove useless, if that bliss is not achieved...

Going to the Himalayas to bury his limbs,
he could not bury himself into that bliss...

One who becomes a roaming *derwish* and explores portions of the earth,
that bliss remains farther remote to him.

He who is fortunate in life and [h]e who has material plenty,
without reciting One Name, that bliss remains distinct from him...

I showed to you, the asceticism of those who did not attain,
now, I shall explain to you of those who have attained...

Kabīr, the slave and Rāmānanda the master,
attained that bliss and rejoiced in it...

[129] Eliade notes: "The worldly person lives in society, marries, establishes a family; Yoga prescribes solitude and chastity" (Eliade, s.v. Yoga, 9896). It is interesting to note here that unlike many of the Hindu ascetics, Pīr Shams was not an avowed celibate.

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Agar, Kīlijan[,] and Tulsī attained,
they also found themselves in harmony with that bliss...

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The philosophers and the ascetics,
by attaining that bliss became fortunate.

That bliss Gorakh[130] attained undoubtedly,
understanding asceticism earned the reward of his austerities...

All who attained were revealed to you,
[y]et, there is no end to those who attain.

In innumerable eras those who contemplated on the Name
found themselves in harmony with that bliss....[131]

Pīr Shams chastised those who were erring on the *yogic* path (e.g., various types of Ṣūfīs and Hindu ascetics). His verses functioned not as a lampoon, but as a critique expressing the futility of these practices. Only the *yogin* who has traversed the path from the mundane to the spiritual knows about the experience, but words do not exist to explain it. Those who have tasted the bliss cannot explain it in the language of mortals. Yoga is considered a science, but unlike the natural sciences, empirical evidence cannot be had;[132] after all, the spiritual path is an esoteric path.

Pīr Shams had a high regard for Rāmānanda, who welcomed into his order anyone seeking to know the love of the Divine, and is named in this *ginān* as among those who attained bliss.[133] Both religious orders were inclusive in terms of membership. It is known that

[130] "Although the dates of Gorakhnāth cannot be ascertained, scholars agree that he may have lived between the 9th and 12th centuries in northern Pañjāb" (Jamani, 57). "Besides the *Brahm Prakāsh*, references to Gorakhnāth are also found in a few other places in a *ginān* attributed to the same *pīr*. There is no possibility, however, of ascertaining whether Shams al-Dīn, the Nizārī *pīr* to whom is attributed the *ginān*[,] *Brahm Prakāsh*, had any direct connection with Gorakhnāth himself" (Ibid., 59).

[131] Ibid., 42-46. "Shams Dariyā, searches the river, and preaches in the form of a *derwish*" (Ibid., 53). "There can be no doubt that the Buddhist texts do at times use the term Brahmin in order to refer to Brahmin ascetics. A clear example is SN IV p. 118: 'Fasting, sleeping on the ground, bathing early in the morning and [reciting] the three *Vedas*, [wearing] rough hides, with matted hair and dirt, [uttering] sacred syllables, following ethical rules and observances, using ascetic practices, hypocrisy, deceit, sticks, the various ritual uses of water, *these are the characteristics of the Brahmins*, practised for some insignificant gain'" (See Johannes Bronkhorst, *Two Sources of Indian Asceticism* (Bern: Peter Lang, Inc., European Academic Publishers, 1993), 82-83).

[132] I.K. Taimni's book is entitled *The Science of Yoga*.

[133] Jamani, 44. In light of the late anachronistic allusions to Rāmānanda and Kabīr, further research on the composition of Pīr Shams' *ginān*, *Brahm Prakāsh*, is needed.

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Rāmānanda founded his own order after leaving the Rāmānuja order, as he felt that among other things, the social caste system supported by Rāmānuja's order was counter-intuitive to Rāmānanda's concept of all disciples being united in a spiritual family.[134] Lamb notes:

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> In contrast to the restrictions of the Rāmānuja order, it is said that Rāmānanda did not place limits on who could become a follower and consequently attracted a widely diverse group, including individuals from many castes and occupations, women, householders, and even Muslims, the most famous of the latter being Kabīr.[135]

Similarities exist between the Ismā'īlī-s and Rāmānandī-s. Both are said to take vows (*vrata*). The Ismā'īlī *murīd*, for example, vows not only their loyalty to the Imām, but also to perform the morning meditation, and recite the great Name. These vows are seen as vital toward the path to attaining *brahm sukh.*

CONCLUSION

From time immemorial, yoga and ascetic practices have continued to play intrinsic roles in the subcontinent. In the experiential milieu that characterized the Indo-Ismā'īlī tradition

> ...there are evidences that the society into which Nizārī Ismā'īlism sought to penetrate was already under the influence of mystical trends. These mystics appear to have been largely under the influence of the Tantric tradition. References in the text of *Brahm Prakāsh* suggest that it is perhaps composed in line with the mystical trend of thought prevalent during the medieval era.[136]

As illustrated in Pīr Shams' *gināN*, the *raison d'être* of the Ismā'īlī *murīd* was to attain divine bliss realized through the Imām, i.e., the ancient Yogī.

[134] Lamb, 321 and 324. "Rāmānandī-s define their family in a fashion parallel to birth families. Thus, one's teacher is the 'father' of one's spiritual life, the other disciples of the same teacher become one's *guru* brothers and sisters, whether or not they are renunciants. One's teacher's teacher is called grandfather *guru*,...[and] his other disciples become one's uncle or aunt *gurus*" (Ibid., 324).
[135] Ibid., 322.
[136] Jamani, 103-104.

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